THE ENGLISH REVIEW

MARCH 1909

EMILE VERHAEREN : HENRY JAMES : JOSEPH CONRAD
VIOLET HUNT : H. GRANVILLE BARKER : ETHEL CLIFFORD : J. W. ALLEN
H. G. WELLS : H. BELLOC
G. K. CHESTERTON

LONDON : DUCKWORTH & CO.
PUBLISHED MONTHLY 2/6 NET

MANCHESTER.

SUBSCRIPTION

Three Months	*Seven Shillings*
Six Months	*Twelve Shillings*
Yearly	*One Guinea*

and upwards

Mr. MURRAY'S NEW BOOKS

THE BISHOP AND THE BOGIEMAN
JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS'S NEW NOVEL

Author of "Uncle Remus," &c. 2s. 6d. net.

SEPTIMUS
W. J. LOCKE'S NEW NOVEL

Author of "The Beloved Vagabond." Third Impression. 6s.

Truth says: "If you want a perfectly delightful book, get W. J. Locke's 'Septimus.'"

MISS ESPERANCE AND MR. WYCHERLY
MRS. L. ALLEN HARKER'S NEW NOVEL. 6s.

The *Lady* says: "The most delightful book of its kind we have ever read. A story of the 'Cranford' type, as gracefully written, as full of tender humour, as Mrs. Gaskell's masterpiece, and even more endearing . . . It is impossible within a few lines to give any impression of such a book as this, nor is it really necessary, for everyone who is capable of appreciating true literature will read it with sympathetic tears and laughter, and return to it lovingly as one meets and greets tried and faithful friends."

JOHANNES BRAHMS
The Herzogenberg Correspondence. Edited by MAX KALBECK, and Translated by HANNAH BRYANT (Mrs. Atkinson). With Portrait. Demy 8vo, 10s. 6d. net.

CORRESPONDENCE OF GEORGE CANNING AND SOME INTIMATE FRIENDS
Containing Hitherto Unpublished Letters, "Jeux d'Esprit," &c., of George Canning, the Honble. Charles Bagot, the Rev. J. Sneyd, the Marquess Wellesley, Lord Binning, William Wellesley Pole, Lord Lyttelton, George and Charles Ellis, Bootle Wilbraham, John Hookham Frere, Stratford Canning, and many others. Edited by Captain JOSCELINE BAGOT. With Portraits, 2 vols. demy 8vo, 30s. net.

THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL SIR LEOPOLD McCLINTOCK
The Great Arctic Explorer and Discoverer of the Fate of Franklin. By Sir CLEMENTS MARKHAM, K.C.B., F.R.S. With an Introductory Note by the Most Rev. WILLIAM ALEXANDER, D.D., Archbishop of Armagh. With Maps and Illustrations. Demy 8vo, 15s. net.

THE LIFE OF PHILIBERT COMMERSON
D.M. NATURALISTE DU ROI

An Old-world Story of French Travel and Science in the Days of Linnæus. By the late Captain S. PASFIELD OLIVER, R.A. Edited by G. F. SCOTT-ELLIOT, F.L.S., F.R.G.S. With Illustrations, demy 8vo, 10s. 6d. net.

DOURIS AND THE PAINTERS OF GREEK VASES
Translated from the French of EDMOND POTTIER, of the Musée de Louvre, Paris, by BETTINA KAHNWEILER. With a Preface by JANE ELLEN HARRISON, of Newnham College, Cambridge. With Coloured and other Illustrations. Demy 8vo, 7s. 6d. net.

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

New Books from DUCKWORTH & CO.'S List of Publications

Great Masters of Dutch and Flemish Painting.

By Dr. W. BODE. With 48 Illustrations. Pott 4to, 7s. 6d. net.

The list of Painters whose works are discussed and illustrated here includes Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Vermier, Metsu, Jan Steen, Wouwermans, Paul Potter, Reubens, and Van Dyck.

Christopher Wren

By LENA MILMAN. With upwards of 50 Illustrations. Pott 4to, 7s. 6d. net.
[*Now ready.*

The Rubaiyat of Umar Khayyam

FitzGerald's Second Edition. Edited by EDWARD HERON ALLEN. Crown 8vo, 10s. 6d. net.

Great Actors of the Eighteenth Century

By KARL MANTZIUS. Being Vol. V. of "A History of Theatrical Art," with 73 Illustrations from Photographs, Prints, Drawings, &c. Royal 8vo, 10s. net.

The period here treated of covers the time of Adrienne Le Couvreur, Voltaire, Betterton, Colley Cibber, James Quin, Ch. Macklin, and Garrick. [*In the Press.*

A History of Art

By Dr. GIULIO CAROTTI, of the Royal Academy in Milan and the Royal University of Rome.

Volume I. **Ancient Art.** With 500 Illustrations. Small crown 8vo, 5s. net. [*Ready.*
Volume II. **The Middle Ages.** With very numerous Illustrations. Small cr. 8vo, 5s. net. [*Shortly.*

Francis Joseph I.: his Life and Times

An Essay in Politics (with an Appendix dealing with Recent Events). By R. P. MAHAFFY. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. net.

This book attempts to summarise the life of the oldest and one of the most important of European Sovereigns, the Emperor-King who has been sixty years on the throne. The portion dealing with recent events in Austria-Hungary will serve to correct some false impressions.

Some African Highways

A Journey of Two Women to Uganda and the Transvaal. By CAROLINE KIRKLAND. Introduction by Lieut.-Gen. BADEN-POWELL. Illustrations and Maps, crown 8vo, 6s. net.

"Enthusiasm and vitality. A very vivacious book."—*Observer.*

Pros and Cons of Vivisection

By Dr. CHARLES RICHET, Professor of Physiology in the Faculty of Medicine, Paris. With a Preface by Professor HALLIBURTON. Illustrated, 2s. 6d. net.

Parallel Paths

A Study in Biology, Ethics, and Art. By T. W. ROLLESTON. Crown 8vo, 5s. net.

"Brilliant and suggestive. Mr. Rolleston delights his readers."—*Spectator.*

Woman in Industry

From Seven Points of View. With a Preface by D. J. SHACKLETON, M.P. Crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. net.

Sir Richard Tangye

By STUART J. REID, D.C.L. With Photogravure Portrait. Large crown 8vo, 6s.

"A very well written account of an excellent man, a typical specimen of a fine class, a man with an amiable and interesting personality, and many-sided activities which were beneficial to his fellow-townsmen, to the country, and the Empire."—*Standard.*

London: DUCKWORTH & CO., 3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C.

EGYPT

AND HOW TO SEE IT

SEASON 1908–1909

THE OFFICIAL GUIDE-BOOK OF THE EGYPTIAN STATE RAILWAYS

WITH 41 ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR BY

A. O. LAMPLOUGH

AND 3 MAPS

FCAP. 8vo, 208 PAGES

PRICE 2/6

SPECIMEN

CHAPTER I

GENERAL INFORMATION

THE best months for Egypt are from October to May. The weather is delightful all through, save for a very few days. In the worst years, indeed, one may possibly count ten days that are not quite perfect, but a few showers, one or two days of rain, and perhaps one day of rather hot wind and dust in April are all one need expect. The rest is sunshine and warmth such as even the Riviera cannot afford.

Of routes there is a very wide choice: one can go by long sea, which takes from twelve to fifteen days and is certainly cheapest, or one may go from Marseilles, Genoa, Naples, Venice, Trieste, Brindisi, or Constantinople. The shortest route is, of course, *via* Brindisi, and takes four and a half days. Full particulars are given on page 202.

It is as well to secure a passage early, as, especially in the late autumn, the boats may be crowded. One may note here that it is almost always possible to secure a place in the P. & O. Brindisi Mail Express, even at the last moment.

As to clothes and general equipment, no very special measures need be taken. Ordinary English summer clothing

BALLANTYNE & CO. LIMITED

TAVISTOCK ST., COVENT GARDEN, LONDON, W.C

SIDGWICK & JACKSON Ltd.

THE LETTERS OF JAMES
BOSWELL
to the REV. W. J. TEMPLE. With an Introduction by THOMAS SECCOMBE, and three Portraits.
Demy 8vo. 7s. 6d. net.

"There must be many who love their Boswell but have never read his letters—many, therefore, who will thank Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson for the handsome shape of the volume and Mr. Seccombe for the skill and humour with which he has introduced his subject."—*Times.*

"Afford far more entertainment than most works of fiction."—*Westminster Gazette.*

"The strangest mystery of all, however, is that these interesti g, entertaini g, in fact delightful letters, though appreciated by good judges of the day, till last December had never been reprinted."
Athenæum.

"A volume of unusual historic interest."
Manchester Guardian.

"This book is worthy of holding a place not beside, but next to, the immortal biography."
Daily News.

THOMAS STOTHARD
R.A. His Life and Work. By A. C. COXHEAD. With 53 Full-page Illustrations and Cuts in the text. Extra royal 8vo. Cheap edition, 8s. 6d. net.

"An interesting and extremely well illustrated volume."—*Westminster Gazette.*

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE
And other Poems, by the Rev. CHAS. WOLFE. With a Collotype Facsimile of the Original Manuscript of "The Burial of Sir John Moore," and an Introductory Memoir by C. LITTON FALKINER. 1s. net.

"In this dainty little volume . . . we have a really succinct biography of Wolfe as well as his complete poems."—C.K.S. in the *Sphere.*

SELECTED POEMS OF LAURENCE HOUSMAN
F'cap 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

"Mr. Laurence Housman is a poet some of whose sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."—*Telegraph.*

THE STORY OF AMARYLLIS & OTHER VERSES
By VIOLA TAYLOR. Square 8vo. 3s. 6d. net.

"A piece of delicate tracery in graceful verse."
Morning Post.

3 Adam Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.

SIDGWICK & JACKSON Ltd.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THREE PLAYS BY
GRANVILLE BARKER:
THE MARRYING OF ANN LEETE;
THE VOYSEY INHERITANCE;
AND WASTE
In one Vol., 5s. *net.* Singly, in cloth, 2s. *net*; in wrappers, 1s. 6d. *net.*

THE POCKET BOOK SERIES
F'cap 8vo, 232 pp., cloth, 1s. 6d. net; leather, 2s. 6d. net.
1. FAMOUS POEMS
2. SELECTIONS FROM DICKENS
3. ESSAYS ON WALKING. With an Introduction by H. BELLOC.

SAILING SHIPS:
THE STORY OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY. By E. KEBLE CHATTERTON. With over 100 Illustrations from photographs & drawings. 16s. net.

*** A Popular History of Ships, very fully illustrated, from Egyptian and Phœnician vessels to modern yachts.

LAND VALUES
TAXATION: The Essential Reform. By C. H. CHOMLEY and R. L. OUTHWAITE. Crown 8vo, cloth, 1s. 6d. *net*; wrappers, 1s. *net.*

*** A Handbook to an important question of the day, written by experts.

THE COMPLETE ENGLISH WORKS OF
THOMAS CAMPION
Edited by A. H. BULLEN.
F'cap 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d. net; leather, 3s. 6d. net.

*** A Pocket Edition of the Poems and Masques, reprinted from Mr. Bullen's *editio princeps.*

3 Adam Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.

THE ENGLISH REVIEW

CONTENTS OF FOURTH NUMBER

1.	MODERN POETRY	Emile Verhaeren*	609
		Ethel Clifford	611
2.	J. W. ALLEN	The Back of Beyond	618
3.	HENRY JAMES	"The Velvet Glove"*	625
4.	JOSEPH CONRAD	Some Reminiscences (iv)*	650
5.	VIOLET HUNT	The Coach	665
6.	M.	Family Stories of a Public Servant	681

[*Contents continued on page* vii

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

HISTORICAL PORTRAITS—Richard II. to Henry Wriothesley, 1400—1600. The Lives by C. R. L. FLETCHER, the Portraits chosen by EMERY WALKER. With an Introduction on the History of Portraiture in England. 4to, 8s. 6d. net.

LIFE AND LETTERS OF SIR HENRY WOTTON. By L. PEARSALL-SMITH. Two volumes. 8vo. 25s. net.

ENGLISH HISTORICAL REVIEW.—"Mr. Pearsall-Smith's work in these volumes shows a rare combination of literary sense, painstaking care in collecting, elucidating, and dating his material, balanced judgment, and self-repression."

STOW'S SURVEY OF LONDON. Edited by C. L. KINGSFORD. 8vo, 2 vols., with a Folding Map of London in 1600 (by H. W. CRIBB) and other Illustrations. 30s. net.

ATHENAEUM.—"Will be for many years to come the definitive edition of the monumental work of the first and greatest of London topographers."

A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN ENGLAND. By ERNEST WALKER. 8vo, 7s. 6d. net.

SPECTATOR.—"The best book on the subject that has yet been published."

BLAKE'S POETICAL WORKS. A new and verbatim text from the MS. engraved and letterpress originals, with variorum readings and bibliographical notes and prefaces. By JOHN SAMPSON. 10s. 6d. net.

TIMES.—"An admirable piece of work. . . . Should become the standard authority for all Blake students."

A NATURALIST IN TASMANIA. By GEOFFREY SMITH. With 33 Plates, 4 Text Figures, and a Folding Map showing the Geographical Features of the Island. 8vo, 7s. 6d. net.

TIMES.—"The book furnishes a good sketch of the natural history of Tasmania. . . . The style of writing is in every respect superior to that of most books of travel or of natural history."

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN. A Dramatic Poem. By CHARLES WELLS. With an Introduction by A. C. SWINBURNE, and a Note on Rossetti and Charles Wells by THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON. (New Volume World's Classics.) From 1s. net.

COMPLETE CATALOGUE POST FREE ON APPLICATION.

LONDON: HENRY FROWDE, Oxford University Press, Amen Corner, E.C.

HARPER & BROTHERS

A UNIQUE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH NAVY

THE BRITISH TAR

In Fact and Fiction. The Poetry, Pathos and Humour of the Sailor's Life.

With Frontispiece in Colour and 130 Illustrations from Old Prints, &c.

Commander C. N. ROBINSON, R.N. (Author of "The British Fleet")

With Chapters on the Place of the Sea Officer and Seaman in Naval History by

JOHN LEYLAND (Author of "The Blockade of Brest," &c.)

Demy 8vo, cloth gilt, **15s.** net.

This volume fills a great gap in our national literature. The influence of the seaman—officer and man—his character and social life, his appearance in drama, fiction, satire, and poetry, are the subject of fresh and original treatment. It is the only account of the *personnel* of the Navy in existence, and throws much valuable light on Naval History. The illustrations—a special feature of the book—are from private and public collections, and present a series of pictures of nautical life, sentiment, humour, and caricature such as cannot be found elsewhere.

A REMARKABLE FIRST NOVEL BY AN ENGLISH WRITER

DIANA OF THE SWAMP

ROY N. CLARKE 6s.

Showing how a weird curse is fulfilled after a lifetime of strange and ruthless evil-doing.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE COMIC SIDE OF SCHOOL LIFE"

MERRY MOMENTS WITH SCHOLARS

HENRY J. BARKER 1s. net

With Cover Design by J. HASSALL

The humour of the English schoolboy and school girl as seen by an Inspector of Schools.

HARPER'S LIBRARY OF LIVING THOUGHT

Fcap. 8vo, Gilt Tops, Decorative Covers, Richly Gilt Backs.

Per Volume: Cloth, 2s. 6d. net; Leather, 3s. 6d. net.

"A library of new books written by authorities, and devoted to the study of the vital problems with which this age is confronted. A bold enterprise, and one to be commended."—*Daily Chronicle.*

"The series, designed to give us the master ideas of great writers, will be a permanently useful addition to literature."—*Daily Telegraph.*

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

Three Plays of Shakespeare

"Leads us to so many fine points of observation which a less ardent admirer might miss."

Daily Telegraph.

COUNT LEO TOLSTOY

The Teaching of Jesus

"Will set students thinking and freshen their appreciation of the essence of the teaching of Jesus."

Christian World.

W. M. FLINDERS PETRIE

Personal Religion in Egypt Before Christianity

"What Christianity meant to those who actually heard the teaching of the Way."

Descriptive Leaflet on application announcing forthcoming works by

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON AND SVANTE ARRHENIUS

HARPER'S MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY Number. 7 Complete Stories. 60 Illustrations.

E. A. ABBEY, R.A. Illustrations to Shakespeare's "Pericles."

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON. Comments on "Pericles."

Contributions by Marjorie Bowen, Norman Duncan, W. D. Howells, Professor T. R. Lounsbury, &c.

RADIUM AND THE EARTH'S HEAT. By Professor J. Joly.

BERLIN TENEMENTS. With 9 Illustrations from Photographs.

THE INNER SHRINE. A New Serial (Anonymous). Illustrated by Frank Craig.

HARPER & BROTHERS, 45 Albemarle Street, London, W.

CONTENTS—(*continued*)

7. H. GRANVILLE BARKER — Georgiana (ii)* — 690

8. H. G. WELLS — Tono-Bungay* — 700

9. THE MONTH

EDITORIAL: *THE FUNCTION OF THE ARTS IN THE REPUBLIC—IV. The Plastic Arts* — 795

POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC: MODERN LIFE—(i) H. BELLOC, *The Source of Information*; (ii) G. K. CHESTERTON, *The Homelessness of Jones*; (iii) D.S., *The Russian Spy System: The Azeff Scandals in Russia* — 799

* Copyright in the United States of America, 1909

THE NATION.

THE MOST VIGOROUS & ORIGINAL OF THE CRITICAL WEEKLY JOURNALS.

"THE NATION" keeps its readers in touch with Liberal thought and with new or interesting movements in politics and social affairs, furnishing them at the same time with serious, independent, and authoritative criticism in its articles on religion, art and literature. It is fresh in style, varied in subject, and commands the most brilliant staff of writers in London. It makes a special feature of domestic and external politics of foreign nations, of poetry, of dramatic criticism, while its reviews are contributed by writers of unequalled authority in their special subjects.

"THE NATION" IS THE ONLY WEEKLY LIBERAL REVIEW.

Among the Chief Features are—

DIARY OF THE WEEK:
An Epitome of the Salient Features of the Week's News told in a concise form.

POLITICS AND AFFAIRS:
Editorials on Burning Questions by leading Statesmen and Journalists.

LIFE AND LETTERS:
Criticisms and Essays on Literature, Art, Religion, and Social Questions.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS. **THE WEEK IN THE CITY.**

EVERY SATURDAY, **6d.**, or **26s.** per annum, post free.

Publishing Office: 14 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.

MESSRS. BELL'S BOOKS

JUST PUBLISHED. Crown 8vo. **6s.** net.

HISTORY OF THE LATIN AND TEUTONIC NATIONS (1494-1514). By LEOPOLD VON RANKE. A Revised Translation by G. R. DENNIS, B.A. (London). With an Introduction by EDWARD ARMSTRONG, M.A., Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford.

A thoroughly revised translation of this famous work, which Lorentz called one of Ranke's "most original and instructive contributions to history," and which gives a general account of the history of Europe during a period of the highest interest and importance.

READY IMMEDIATELY. Fcap. 8vo. **5s.**

LONDON'S LURE. An Anthology of Prose and Verse Passages bearing on London. By HELEN and LEWIS MELVILLE. With special binding and End-papers.

MASTERS OF LITERATURE. A New Series of Representative Passages from the Works of the Great Writers in Prose and Verse, with biographical and critical Introductions and Notes. Crown 8vo. **2s. 6d.** net each.

First List of Volumes. Ready Shortly.

SCOTT. By Professor Grant. FIELDING. By Professor Saintsbury.
DEFOE. By John Masefield. CARLYLE. By the Rev. A. W. Evans.
Others to follow.

READY SHORTLY. 4to. **21s.** net.

MODERN HOMES. By C. RAFFLES DAVISON, Editor of "The British Architect." Illustrated by Photographs and Pen-Drawings by the Author.

A book of typical specimens of modern country-house architecture, which should appeal to all who are interested in present-day domestic architecture, and especially to those who are contemplating building.

JUST PUBLISHED. Vol. IV., containing Parts VII. & VIII. Small 4to, with 3 Maps and 2 Plans, **12s.** net.

THE ITINERARY OF JOHN LELAND. Newly Edited from the MSS. By LUCY TOULMIN SMITH.

This Edition will be completed in five volumes, of which Vol. I. (containing Parts I.–III.), price 18s. net, Vol. II. (Parts IV. and V.), price 12s. net, and Vol. III. (the "Itinerary in Wales"), price 10s. 6d. net, are also published. Vol. V. (completing the work) is in active preparation.

"The present edition was worth waiting for, and we are grateful to Miss Smith for the care she has bestowed on a congenial task. The result of Miss Smith's editing is eminently satisfactory. The 'Itinerary,' which is interspersed with extracts from charters and lives of the saints, abounds with lights on the vanishing feudal period, and there are few who will not find the indefatigable old antiquary an amusing and most instructive companion."—*Westminster Gazette.*

JUST PUBLISHED. Demy 8vo. **8s. 6d.** net.

LIFE OF DEAN COLET, Founder of St. Paul's School. By the Rev. J. H. LUPTON, M.A., late Surmaster of St. Paul's School, and formerly Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. With an Appendix of some of his English Writings, and a Facsimile Portrait taken from the Engraving in Holland's "Heroölogia." New and Revised Edition.

In view of the approaching celebration of the fourth centenary of St. Paul's School, special interest attaches to this new edition of the life of its founder.

Fcap. 8vo. **5s.** net.

CATULLI CARMINA. Edited, with Copious Explanatory Notes, by CHARLES STUTTAFORD.

"Intended for the class whose Latin has become rusty in consequence of the exigencies of a professional or business occupation. Well and wisely annotated for the purpose, and produced admirably."
Evening Standard.

THE STANDARD AUTHORITY.

WEBSTER'S INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY. Twentieth Century Edition. Revised and Enlarged, with an Appendix of 25,000 Words, Phrases, and Definitions. 2,348 pages, 5,000 Illustrations.

MARK TWAIN says:—"A dictionary is the most awe-inspiring of all books,—it knows so much; and 'Webster's International' is to me the most awe-inspiring of all dictionaries, because it exhausts knowledge, apparently. It has gone around like a sun, and spied out everything and lit it up. This is a wonderful book,—the most wonderful that I know of."

WRITE FOR DETAILED PROSPECTUS, with Specimen Pages, hundreds of Opinions of other Eminent Men, and prices in various styles of binding.

LONDON: GEORGE BELL & SONS, PORTUGAL STREET, W.C.

THE
ENGLISH REVIEW
MARCH 1909

MODERN POETRY

La Prière

Par Emile Verhaeren

QUE bondisse soudain mon âme aventurière
Vers l'avenir,
Et tout à coup je sens encor
Comme au temps de l'enfance, au fond de moi, frémir,
L'aile qui dort
D'une ancienne prière.

D'autres phrases et d'autres mots sont murmurés
Mais le vieux rythme, avec ses cris, est demeuré
Après combien de jours, le même ;
Le temps l'a mis en moi, le temps et les aïeux
Quand on avait besoin de trouer l'or des cieux
D'une supplique ou d'un blasphème.

Aujourd'hui même, il vibre en mon être emporté
De vol en vol vers la meilleure humanité,
Qui lentement, de siècle en siècle, s'élabore ;
Et j'espère et je tremble, et je pleure et je veux,
Et c'est lui qui soulève, en son élan sonore,
Comme un brasier de flammes dansantes, mes vœux.

O l'antique ferveur dont survit l'étincelle !
O prière debout, ô prière nouvelle !
Futur ! vous m'exaltez comme autrefois, mon Dieu ;
Vous aussi dominez l'heure, et l'âge où nous sommes ;
Mais vous, du moins, un jour, vous deviendrez des hommes,
Et vous serez leurs cœurs, leurs cerveaux, et leurs yeux.

Dussiez vous être moins que ne le veut mon rêve
Que m'importe ! Si chaque fois,
Que mon ardeur vous entrevoit,
Elle s'attise et se relève.

Ce qu'il nous faut, à tous, c'est quelque haut désir
Que forment les aïeux et dont leurs fils s'enflamment,
Pour qu'à travers les temps se concentrent les âmes
Autour d'un fier espoir, qui ne veut pas mourir.

Dites, le travail sûr, quoique lent et minime,
De l'effort de chacun vers un but unanime
Malgré l'ennui, l'angoisse, et les affres des jours ?
Dites, s'emplir le cœur ravi de ce beau songe
Qui ne peut être, lui, tout entier un mensonge
Et qui ébauche en ses plus lumineux contours
Les plus hauts gestes de l'amour.
Dites, aimer sa force ardente et solitaire
Pour qu'elle soit, un jour, l'ornement de la terre,
Quand tous en comprendront la secrète bonté ;
Donner un sens nouveau aux passions humaines
Pour que leurs nœuds formidables fassent les chaînes
Qui relient l'avenir avec témérité
Au présent, déjà surmonté.

Dites, agir, agir, et repousser les doutes ;
Admettre que soit rude et tragique la route
Sans même un abri sûr, sous les arbres d'un seuil ;
Se nourrir de courage et de ferme pensée,
Oublier tout péril, quand son heure est passée,
Et marcher à travers la ténèbre et le deuil
Avec ce seul flambeau : l'orgueil !

Et quand le jour décline et que les bras sont las
Et que le sommeil rôde à l'entour des paupières,
Dites, faire soudain des vœux et des prières
Pour tout cela !

The Dryad

By Ethel Clifford

I

SINGING THROUGH THE WOOD

Dawn. Dawn. Wake, dryads, wake.
The sun is risen. Gold and rose he gleams.
And all the gossamers have spread their webs
And caught the dewy beads that hold our dreams.

Look in their crystal. Which one will you choose
To carry in your heart the green day through?
The rosy centaury's an open star,
The speedwell hides her grey beneath her blue.

And all the birds are waking, till the trees
Ring, like the bells at mass, with holy song;
As when we listened once, without the church,
And heard the prayers of mortals, faint and long.

Dawn. Dawn. Day is in the wood.
Her misty veil from earth the sun draws up.
Come down with me and kneel beside the stream,
My dew-wet hands shall be your drinking-cup.

II

INVITATION

Shepherd, shepherd, from the hill
Drive your flock to fold,
While the sun is lying still
In his pall of gold,
In the water cold.

I your dryad wait for you
Where the shadow deep
Warns the day-birds fly the dew,
Night-birds wake from sleep
Vigil grey to keep.

Now the silence of the stars,
Magical as speech,
Bids you where the brown evejars
Flit by fir and beech
Calling each to each.

Since we kissed beside the stream
I have suffered change.
Now there stands within my dream
Something new and strange.
Far my visions range.

Village maids may love you well,
More the dryad can.
Only held beneath her spell
Shall a mortal man
Hear the flute of Pan.

Come, the nightingale uplifts
High her golden voice.
Song, the fairest of love's gifts,
Bids your heart rejoice.
Shepherd, make your choice.

III

DRYAD'S SONG AT MIDNIGHT

My shepherd tastes of one enchanted hour,
All knowledge has he now, and all delight,
That wild things have, the primitive of earth—
And I—lie listening to the angry night.

Angry the voices that were once a song,
Angry the wind. When dryad weds with man
The trees are changed to her and all the earth
Carries the anger of unpitying Pan.

This is my sentence : memory is mine,
  But closed are all the ways that once I knew ;
I may not see my sisters in the wood
  Nor hear their footsteps break the beads of dew.

Never again to have about my feet
  The wide-eyed hares ; nor have the small birds know
My hollowed hands a hiding-place ; nor sit
  Beside their nests and watch young squirrels grow.

Never again to lie amid the brake
  And, idly stripping off the velvet seeds,
To watch the dragon-flies above the pool
  And hear the Hunter piping in the reeds.

And darkness, once the iridescent wing
  Of some great god who, flying, hid the sun,
Must be what mortals know, a time for sleep,
  A veil of shadows dropping one by one.

Shepherd, my shepherd, what have you to give
  To take the place of that I may not keep ?
With what warm comfort will you stay these tears
  That till this hour I knew not how to weep ?

IV

THE SHEPHERD IN THE DOORWAY

O wonder magical, earth's midnight voice,
  That lures me from my dryad's arms to stand
Here at my cottage door, beneath the stars,
  While from my brow there lifts the mortal brand,

O endless whisper of undying woods.
  O myriad murmurs of the wild unseen.
I know your meaning now, and suddenly
  I know what once my primal soul has been.

Long is it since I drank the morning-dew
  From cups that spring at dawn and die with day.
Long since I too was crowned with beechen leaves
  And with strange hunting sped the night away.

O rapture of the winged and singing host.
  O joy of all fleet-footed things that run.
For one short hour my soul is one with yours,
  I know the spell of moon and hidden sun.

Father of forests, great immortal Pan,
  Can I forget that I have seen your face?
Must I forget? I who have heard you speak
  And heard you piping in the secret place? . . .

Now fades my dryad's spell. My hour is done.
  Mortal I turn again to where she lies.
What shall I give her for so fair a gift?—
  Alas! The birth of sorrow in her eyes.

V

BY THE FIRESIDE

Alas these mortals! Every passing year
  Draws a grey veil before what once was clear,
And hides beneath it all their hearts held dear:
The shield of faith, the sandals winged with hope,
  The golden gifts the fairies bring at birth;
The coat of dreams, adventure's shining helm,
  The sword of youth that conquers all the earth.

Alas for mortals! Every fleeting breath
  Robs of a dream the heart laid bare beneath,
Until there falls the sable veil of Death.
And through its dark they take a lonely road,
  And what they do thereon not one may know.
I think they ever seek the gate of Life
  And blow about the world as dead leaves blow.

VI

NEW HOPE

Deep in the woods the wild white cherry grows.
Anew each year her virgin white she shows,
  Then yields her to the summer's green embrace
  And bears her fruit; then mourns a little space.

Dryad was I at last year's blossomtide.
High summer gave me for a mortal's bride,
And now I bear my fruit—and must know pain.
Shall I be pardoned when Spring comes again?

Last night I dreamed that through the casement square
One of my sisters looked: the empty air
Mocked me who sought to trace her, bending low,
By steps too light to mark the driven snow.

It may be that the father of the trees
Will lift my sentence when the child he sees;
If I at last fulfil the mortal plan
And that within me quickens and is man.

Yet still will I endure this mortal air
Until a year has made him brave and fair.
Then will I with him to the secret place
And let the dryads look upon his face.

Deep in the woods the wild white cherry grows.
Anew each year her virgin white she shows.
Pass quickly, moons, and speed, each passing hour,
My next year's garland is of cherry flower.

VII

BESIDE THE CRADLE

Sleep, littlest, while I weave a dream for you
And kiss your little hands with fingers curled
So closely in; the tender bracken fronds
That wake in spring are not more closely furled.

Dream now. We two go by the stream that holds
The lovely look of dawn, red sunset light,
The quivering gold of noon, within its heart,
And all the steely glamour of the night.

Ah, littlest! You and I beneath the trees
That reach in friendship to us as we pass!
The quiring leaves an ecstasy of song,
A thousand green enchantments in the grass!

Dream, firstling. Now we come to where the stream
Is gathered in a pool of water still,
Half bowered in flowering thorns, but at the end
Is, bare of trees, the little windy hill.

Deep in the pool there lies a mermaid's crown.
A sea-maid wandered up the stream one year
But pined to know again the foamy waves
And wearied of the woodland water clear.

But while she lingered, to the water's edge
The dryads came, forsaking each her tree,
And in the silence magical of night
She whispered to us stories of the sea.

Dream, littlest. Now the trees enfold us both
And from the reeds the piping wood-god calls—
Ah! I have known the forest, dreamed the sea—
How shall I live content between stone walls?

VIII

APPEAL

See where I bring you now the beech-crowned child
And set him in the midst of four green ways
That you may look on him. Your jealous hearts,
That will not give me love, must yield him praise.

His young eyes hold the shadowed hyacinth's blue,
His hair is yellow as the sun-kissed corn,
His breath is as the scented cowslip's breath,
His cheeks are like twin roses bramble-born.

And he has drunk of me your hidden lore
And all my memories are green in him;
And he has listened to my whispered dreams
And seen my visions when the light grows dim.

Will you not let him see you? Let him share
The thousand mysteries that mortal eyes
Have never looked on? All the secret, strange
Enchantment that within the forest lies?

Not any knows how fair a thing might grow
  His infant life, half human and half wild.
His mortal body holds a dryad's soul,
  Though you refuse me still, accept the child.

IX

THE RETURN

Come, firstling, back with me, the air grows chill.
  We must go home together, you and I.
The sun withdraws, the quiet shadows fall
  And, all unwatched, our cottage fire will die.

When you at last are grown to man's estate
  And watch your father's flocks upon the hill,
When dryad calls you answer not again,
  Ask not her kiss nor yield you to her will.

For, though she wed with you and love you well,
  Green earth and sky are not more distant set
Than man and wood-maid are. One knows not Pan.
  The other knows and never can forget.

When dryad lies close-held her rebel heart
  Is dancing with her sisters in the wood.
And, when she kneels to pray, her pagan soul
  Follows Pan's hunting far from holy rood.

The wild maid has no tears to weep, no grief.
  Within the forest nought weeps save the rain.
But this she learns of man, and sorrow learns,
  And mortal tears are strange and come with pain.

Take you a mortal maid and make her glad,
  For wild must mate with wild and man with man.
The god of men forgives, but past appeal
  Is the long anger of unpitying Pan.

The Back of Beyond

By J. W. Allen

The milk and honey is beyond this wilderness.

We started, that morning, from an unkempt little town and fared forth into a country that rose gradually about us and ahead. The pastures tilted more and more, and between the green hillocks we had glimpses of larger and greyer heights, blocking the horizon. Then, for a time, we went softly up and down between near slopes that shut out those distant hills. So we came to a bridge and a railway station and left the road and took a winding, stony track that led into the Black Mountains. It took us steadily upward and was almost too narrow and far too stony for two to ride comfortably abreast. Thorny and wind-smitten hedges closed us in and every twenty yards we turned a corner. Of the way before us we knew only that this track would take us across the hills. The hedges vanished, as though the wind of the heights had suddenly become too much for them, and we emerged upon a far-stretching desolation. Behind us, for a little while, we could still see the green and civilised lowlands. In front the track, broader now but stonier than ever, rose steadily across a lifting plain of coarse grass, hummocky and boggy, with never a tree. At some distance ahead it reached an anti-climax and dipped and very far off we saw it reappear, climbing towards a real climax on our horizon. Away in front there, on the left of the track, a huge, rounded mass, bare and rough, rose steeply. Far away across the rolling waste to our right another mountain ridge was lifted, showing what seemed a mile or more of precipice. A strong wind blew joyously in our faces.

Riding was rough work with that wind and the stony unevenness of the track. But over our heads was an enormous sky, under our wheels an earth hardly less large and all the rough grass was awash with wind and across the sunlit waste great cloud shadows drifted.

Never a sign of humanity but ourselves. There was a

strangeness in a place so desolate, reached on our own wheels in a few days from London. The great, silent desert, the ambiguous, lonely heights, brought to my mind void spaces of the pampas, untrodden wastes of the Cordilleras. It seemed as empty as the desert of Gobi, as forlorn as the high glaciers. "Surely," I thought, "we are in the Beyond itself. This is that which lies behind the dust and noise of an ephemeral civilisation. This is that waste of nature, across which Humanity passes as these cloud shadows: that which was before the Romans, before the Stone Age and will be as it is when London is as Carthage."

We reached the side of the mountain we had seen ahead and entered a narrow gorge that led to the top of the pass. On our right the ground fell sharply into the narrowest of valleys and rose again abruptly in another mountain slope. In front, where our track vanished, the great slopes curved inwards and met. Down the gorge the wind streamed, as a river. All but beaten by it we took to walking, not loth to feel our feet and be at leisure in that wilderness.

Then I broke out, uplifted by the wind and sky and not knowing whether I talked sense or nonsense. "We have come," I said, "to the desert fringe on the frontier of man's kingdom. We have reached the tract beyond. This is the end of man's world, which is the beginning of the real world: the world that was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. The great vacuum of matter, the substratum of our world, the great void, this is the gate of it! These grasses are the last vestiges of the world of life at the portals of the void. They will soon pass and at the top there we shall enter the everlasting abyss."

But my friends mocked. "This," he said, "is just a piece of waste land, such as you may see in any London suburb, waiting the builder. All about here, under our feet, is coal. In a very little while, perhaps in our time, there will be chimneys all along here and works and men will be crowded in filthy little streets and grubbing underground. Progress, you know. We are conquering nature and there is no end to man's world. We hope to start mining in Mars some day."

"When," said she, "shall we get something to eat?"

At the top of the pass there was still no sign of humanity. The track plunged steeply downwards. In front a great rocky mountain seemed to have slipped from somewhere down into the valley and choked it with a vast heap of stones. About the sides of it were marble gleams. But a mile or so lower down there was a tiny group of houses and an inn which, though

primitive, sufficed. The mountain ridge was now behind us and we rode gently downward, with even an occasional rise, towards a long, narrow valley that ran to the sea. But there were still mountains to right and left, stonier than those we had left behind, though not so high. One there was, very steep and bare, with a crown of rocks in what seemed concentric circles.

The apparition of a drunken man heralded our return to civilisation. Then came a larger group of houses and after that we entered the valley, definitively. A broad, quite civilised road ran high up above the narrow floor of it and steep, splendid slopes rose right and left of us. And suddenly we found ourselves in a dirty, crowded street.

"A colliery village," my friend said. "We shall have it like this now, the rest of the ten miles down."

On each side was a row of houses of grey sandstone, of a dismal natural colour, begrimed and neglected. Broken windows, heaps of rubbish in filthy little yards, not a green thing growing, not a flower-pot. But for the number of people walking in the roadway and lounging in the yards, the houses might have been thought derelict. The people were as dirty as their dwellings. Clothes, hands and faces, no less than the houses, were begrimed with coal-dust. Singularly beautiful and extraordinarily dirty children played by dozens in the road. Now and again we caught a reek of smoke or of oil. And between the houses we had glimpses of scarred mountain-sides, blackened and desolate, heaped with coal-tips and dotted with smoking chimneys.

"You were about right," my friend remarked, as we picked our way, "when you said we should find the abyss down here. This is what you get to if you go a little below the shining surface. We are going down to the real thing—the basis of civilisation."

We passed through a succession of such places, all alike. There were miles of it. Now and again came a gap of a few hundred yards that unveiled completely the ruin which had come upon the valley. Always the road went downwards towards the sea.

We turned a corner and exclaimed at the vision that met our eyes. Automatically we dismounted and stood gazing. Below us, far away in front, the sun was setting behind a forest of tall chimneys. The whole mouth of the valley, where it widened out to the sea, was choked with them. A haze of smoke hung over them and through this the sun glared redly. Almost black they looked against that murky glow. The dim, confused mass of roofing out of which they rose did not even suggest the

dwellings of men. Behind them was a whitish shining, that might have been the sea. "The theologians must be right, after all," I said. "This is the road to the pit and yonder is the thing itself."

"Merely one of our great furnaces," my friend answered "Copper-smelting, tinplates, chemicals and coal. Have you eaten any tinned meat lately? The tin stuff, very likely, was made down there. It is steel really, thinly tinned over. They roll out bars of steel, heat them and cool them and reheat them, pickle them in sulphuric acid and put them into patent tinning-pots. A lot goes to your tinned meat! And they send coal, of course, to the ends of the earth. It was coal brought from up here that took you, last year, across the Lake of Geneva."

"A witch's cauldron," I said. "And a fine hell-broth must be brewing!"

"But it is fine, all the same," she said.

"It's splendid!"

"The thing is a sort of gland," he remarked, "secreting, transforming, distributing."

"It looks to me," I said, "more like a malignant tumour."

She looked at me with a smile. "But think of the effort," she said. "Just think of the intellect behind all that."

We mounted again and he shot ahead a little. "I feel like Giant Coddles," I called after him. "What's it all for?" And he looked back and laughed.

So we came down on to the flat in the opening of the valley. Straight before us stretched a repulsive waste of street: a street, not of houses, but of engine-sheds and store-sheds, "works" and chimneys. The very air was grimy and thick with smoke and oil. Beating and clanging noises came from the sheds and dirty and ramshackle tramcars creaked and rattled down the roadway.

Abruptly I came out with a question. "Think of Humanity," I said, "as a single Being—an intelligent Being. Why does it make places like this to live in?"

"All we, like sheep, have gone astray," he suggested, with a laugh. "You go in for history. You ought to know."

"I don't know," I said. "After Assyria, Greece, Rome and the rest—this! Surely we might have done better."

"An adventurous Being, trying all ways," she said.

"The question is absurd," said he. "Humanity cannot be thought of as an intelligent Being."

"An adventurous Being," she repeated, "in an unknown world."

It became a procession after that. Perhaps this ending to our journey across the free uplands depressed us all a little or we may have been all a little tired. We had to find our way, too, through a labyrinthine squalor. "How many more miles of these slums are we to have?" she asked at last, drawing up to me as we entered a clamorous, dirty street full of lighted shops. And I laughed and dismounted; for I had just caught sight of the notification: High Street.

Next morning my friends left me, by train for London; but I started afresh. It was a long pull uphill that took me out of the city of furnaces. Even before I was clear of it I had invigorating glimpses of sea and curving coast-line and rocky promontory. The houses thinned and scattered before my eager wheels and at last I found myself clear above the city and out on an expanse of heathery common.

The sea was invisible from here but I felt its presence. It was in front now and on both sides and the whole air was full of it. Wherever you go in this peninsula this abiding presence of the sea is with you. Inland, out of sight and hearing of it for a little while, you know that you have only to ascend the nearest rising ground to see it on one side or on two. All paths lead to it. You can never be far from its murmur and its gleam. It gives to the whole land some of its saltness and its freshness, something of its own primeval youth.

Further on, at the meeting-place of two long slopes, I came suddenly upon the ruins of an ancient castle. On my left, a long narrow creek ran inland from the sea and beside and above it grey fragments of walls and towers stood up to their knees in a huge heap of sand. Quite lonely and derelict it had stood so century after century, gradually overwhelmed and half buried by the sand-drift. My mind went back eight hundred years to the time when all this region was seized and settled by Norman and English adventurers. To this day the whole of this coast is studded with the ruins of their castles. And for eight hundred years the people of the peninsula have been a race apart. Smugglers and wreckers they were, almost within men's memory, until converted by Methodism into a God-fearing folk. The whole country is still full of tales of smuggling and wrecking, as its cliffs are full of caves that are hard to find. Go about among these people and you will soon learn to admire. You will admire the specklessness of their homes, with the old dressers and ancestral china that is not for sale. You will take pleasure in their old-world appliances, their cupboard-beds, their brass sugar-cutters, the pack-saddles that their grandfathers used.

You will respect their independence, their plain simplicity, the excellence of their manners. You will see old men and women among them with blue eyes as lucid and clear as the eyes of a child. In time you may come to envy the laborious and frugal dignity of their lives.

It was as though I had entered a new world, an older world. The road narrowed as my wheels advanced. It became a rough lane between low hedges. On my left were swift visions of land-locked, rock-guarded bays, of rugged limestone cliffs, of cove within cove, of delicate, lonely, curved stretches of sand, of glittering, tumbled water. On my right a heathery saddle-back, green with bracken and grey with great stones. I began to think of those squalid streets and that forest of chimneys as of something already clean passed away from the earth.

Every half-mile deepened my sense of something primitive and undisturbed. I had entered a region as remote from the life of cities as the Happy Isles. I thought of Icelandic fiords. The scattered farm-houses had an air of aloofness and self-sufficiency. All of stone, whitewashed, heavily thatched and gabled, they had been renewed from generation to generation and had never become modern. Ancestral dwellings, they vied in antiquity with our historic mansions but were more perfect in dignity, untouched by the vulgarity of conscious wealth.

Narrower and yet more stony grew the road until I came to the village, twenty miles from a railway station, which was the end of my journey for the moment. It stands on the edge of the cliff, at the very extremity of this remoteness, a tiny group of houses with an ancient church. It looks over the sea towards twin, far-stretching coasts; and when night falls you see the warning lights on islands of rock far out. The cliff drops abruptly and stretches eastward, mile after mile, worked and worn into cove after cove, strange and lonely as on the first day, with here a strip of grass running steeply to the sea between fantastic walls of rock, there a precipice covered with golden lichen. And, coiling seaward in slow, serpentine windings, a fantastic monster of rock, with scaly tail, humped back and dully glistering sides, rears its dragon head a mile from shore.

Stay here for a while and you may get to the back of beyond. Already you are in the borderland. Explore the cliffs and rock terraces, where every corner brings a surprise—mix in the society of the herring-gulls, shags, sea-pies and sand-pipers who people the shore—wander inland over the heathery ridges, taking ever new surveys of the immanent sea—visit the ruined castles and all but

prehistoric vestiges that lie scattered, marking the silence of the land—until all the tumult of the cities becomes a far-off vanity. The littleness and futility of your personal ambitions will become clear to you but you will not be depressed. You will be one with night and day. You will live with the sea-birds, whose life is akin to that of the native men and women. Life will no longer be a tale merely full of sound and fury. And if you have not yet reached the very back of beyond—if there be yet a further deep, an inner sanctuary—that also you may, perchance, find, as I did.

"The Velvet Glove"

By Henry James

I

He thought he had already, poor John Berridge, tasted in their fulness the sweets of success; but nothing yet had been more charming to him than when the young Lord, as he irresistibly and, for greater certitude, quite correctly figured him, fairly sought out, in Paris, the new literary star that had begun to hang, with a fresh red light, over the vast, even though rather confused, Anglo-Saxon horizon; positively approaching that celebrity with a shy and artless appeal. The young Lord invoked on this occasion the celebrity's prized judgment of a special literary case; and Berridge could take the whole manner of it for one of the "quaintest" little acts displayed to his amused eyes, up to now, on the stage of European society—albeit these eyes were quite aware, in general, of missing everywhere as little of the human scene as possible, and of having of late been particularly awake to the large extensions of it spread before him (since so he could but fondly read his fate) under the omen of his prodigious "hit." It was because of his hit that he was having rare opportunities—of which he was so honestly and humbly proposing, as he would have said, to make the most: it was because every one in the world (so far had the thing gone) was reading "The Heart of Gold" as just a slightly too fat volume, or sitting out the same as just a fifth-act too long play, that he found himself floated on a tide he would scarce have dared to show his favourite hero sustained by, found a hundred agreeable and interesting things happen to him which were all, one way or another, affluents of the golden stream.

The great renewed resonance—renewed by the incredible luck of the play—was always in his ears without so much as a conscious turn of his head to listen; so that the queer world of his fame was not the mere usual field of the Anglo-Saxon boom, but positively the bottom of the *whole* theatric sea, unplumbed source of the wave that had borne him in the course of a year or

two over German, French, Italian, Russian, Scandinavian foot-lights. Paris itself really appeared for the hour the centre of his cyclone, with reports and "returns," to say nothing of agents and emissaries, converging from the minor capitals; though his impatience was scarce the less keen to get back to London, where his work had had no such critical excoriation to survive, no such lesson of anguish to learn, as it had received at the hand of supreme authority, of that French authority which was in such a matter the only one to be artistically reckoned with. If his spirit indeed had had to reckon with it his fourth act practically hadn't: it continued to make him blush every night for the public more even than the inimitable *feuilleton* had made him blush for himself.

This had figured, however, after all, the one bad drop in his cup; so that, for the rest, his high-water mark might well have been, that evening at Gloriani's studio, the approach of his odd and charming applicant, vaguely introduced at the latter's very own request by their hostess, who, with an honest, helpless, genial gesture, washed her fat begemmed hands of the name and identity of either, but left the fresh, fair, ever so habitually assured, yet ever so easily awkward Englishman with his plea to put forth. There was that in this pleasant personage which could still make Berridge wonder what conception of profit from him might have, all incalculably, taken form in such a head—these being truly the last entrenchments of our hero's modesty. He wondered, the splendid young man, he wondered awfully, he wondered (it was unmistakable) quite nervously, he wondered, to John's ardent and acute imagination, quite beautifully, if the author of "The Heart of Gold" would mind just looking at a book by a friend of his, a great friend, which he himself believed rather clever, and had in fact found very charming, but as to which—if it really wouldn't bore Mr. Berridge—he should so like the verdict of some one who knew. His friend was awfully ambitious, and he thought there was something in it—with all of which might he send the book to any address?

Berridge thought of many things while the young Lord thus charged upon him, and it was odd that no one of them was any question of the possible worth of the offered achievement—which, for that matter, was certain to be of the quality of *all* the books, to say nothing of the plays, and the projects for plays, with which, for some time past, he had seen his daily post-bag distended. He had made out, on looking at these things, no difference at all from one to the other. Here, however, was

something more—something that made his fellow-guest's overture *independently* interesting and, as he might imagine, important. He smiled, he was friendly and vague ; said " A work of fiction, I suppose ? " and that he didn't pretend ever to pronounce, that he in fact quite hated, always, to have to, not " knowing," as he felt, any better than any one else ; but would gladly look at anything, under that demur, if it would give any pleasure. Perhaps the very brightest and most diamond-like twinkle he had yet seen the star of his renown emit was just the light brought into his young Lord's eyes by this so easy consent to oblige. It was easy because the presence before him was from moment to moment referring itself back to some recent observation or memory ; something caught somewhere, within a few weeks or months, as he had moved about, and that seemed to flutter forth at this stir of the folded leaves of his recent experience very much as a gathered, faded flower, placed there for " pressing," might drop from between the pages of a volume opened at hazard.

He had seen him before, this splendid and sympathetic person—whose flattering appeal was by no means *all* that made him sympathetic ; he had met him, had noted, had wondered about him, had in fact imaginatively, intellectually, so to speak, quite yearned over him, in some conjunction lately, though ever so fleetingly, apprehended : which circumstance constituted precisely an association as tormenting, for the few minutes, as it was vague, and set him to sounding, intensely and vainly, the face that itself figured everything agreeable except recognition. He couldn't remember, and the young man didn't ; distinctly, yes, they had been in presence, during the previous winter, by some chance of travel, through Sicily, through Italy, through the south of France, but his *Seigneurie*—so Berridge liked exotically to phrase it—had then (in ignorance of the present reasons) not noticed *him*. It was positive for the man of established identity, all the while too, and through the perfect lucidity of his sense of achievement in an air " conducting " nothing but the loudest bang, that this was fundamentally much less remarkable than the fact of his being made up to in such a quarter now. That was the disservice, in a manner, of one's having so much imagination : the mysterious values of other types kept looming larger before you than the doubtless often higher but comparatively familiar ones of your own, and if you had anything of the artist's real feeling for life the attraction and amusement of possibilities so projected were worth more to you, in nineteen moods out of twenty, than the sufficiency, the serenity, the

felicity, whatever it might be, of your stale personal certitudes. You were intellectually, you were "artistically" rather abject, in fine, if your curiosity (in the grand sense of the term) wasn't worth more to you than your dignity. What *was* your dignity, "anyway," but just the consistency of your curiosity, and what moments were ever so ignoble for you as, under the blighting breath of the false gods, stupid conventions, traditions, examples, your lapses from that consistency? His *Seigneurie*, at all events, delightfully, hadn't the least real idea of what any John Berridge was talking about, and the latter felt that if he had been less beautifully witless, and thereby less true to his right figure, it might scarce have been forgiven him.

His right figure was that of life in irreflective joy and at the highest thinkable level of prepared security and unconscious insolence. What was the pale page of fiction compared with the intimately personal adventure that, in almost any direction, he would have been all so stupidly, all so gallantly, all so instinctively and, by every presumption, so prevailingly ready for? Berridge would have given six months' "royalties" for even an hour of his looser dormant consciousness—since one was oneself, after all, no worm, but an heir of all the ages too—and yet without being able to supply chapter and verse for the felt, the huge difference. His *Seigneurie* was tall and straight, but so, thank goodness, was the author of "The Heart of Gold," who had no such vulgar "mug" either; and there was no intrinsic inferiority in being a bit inordinately, and so it might have seemed a bit strikingly, black-browed instead of being fair as the morning. Again while his new friend delivered himself our own tried in vain to place him; he indulged in plenty of pleasant, if rather restlessly headlong sound, the confessed incoherence of a happy mortal who had always many things "on," and who, while waiting at any moment for connections and consummations, had fallen into the way of talking, as they said, all artlessly, and a trifle more betrayingly, against time. He would always be having appointments, and somehow of a high "romantic" order, to keep, and the imperfect punctualities of others to wait for—though who would be of a quality to make such a pampered personage wait very much our young analyst could only enjoy asking himself. There were women who might be of a quality—half a dozen of those perhaps, of those alone, about the world; our friend was as sure of this, by the end of four minutes, as if he knew all about it.

After saying he would send him the book the young Lord indeed dropped that subject; he had asked where he might

send it, and had had an "Oh, I shall remember!" on John's mention of an hotel; but he had made no further dash into literature, and it was ten to one that this would be the last the distinguished author might hear of the volume. Such again was a note of these high existences—that made one content to ask of them no whit of other consistency than that of carrying off the particular occasion, whatever it might be, in a dazzle of amiability and felicity and leaving *that* as a sufficient trace of their passage. Sought and achieved consistency was but an angular, a secondary motion; compared with the air of complete freedom it might have an effect of deformity. There was no placing this figure of radiant ease, for Berridge, in any relation that didn't appear not good enough—that is among the relations that hadn't been too good for Berridge himself. He was all right where he was; the great Gloriani somehow made that law; his house, with his supreme artistic position, was good enough for any one, and to-night in especial there were charming people, more charming than our friend could recall from any other scene, as the natural train or circle, as he might say, of such a presence. For an instant he thought he had got the face as a specimen of imperturbability watched, with wonder, across the hushed rattle of roulette at Monte-Carlo; but this quickly became as improbable as any question of a vulgar *table d'hôte*, or a steam-boat deck, or a herd of fellow-pilgrims cicerone-led, or even an opera-box serving, during a performance, for frame of a type observed from the stalls. One placed young gods and goddesses only when one placed them on Olympus, and it met the case, always, that they were of Olympian race, and that they glimmered for one, at the best, through their silver cloud, like the visiting apparitions in an epic.

This was brief and beautiful indeed till something happened that gave it, for Berridge, on the spot, a prodigious extension—an extension really as prodigious, after a little, as if he had suddenly seen the silver clouds multiply and then the whole of Olympus presently open. Music, breaking upon the large air, enjoined immediate attention, and in a moment he was listening, with the rest of the company, to an eminent tenor, who stood by the piano; and was aware, with it, that his Englishman had turned away, and that in the vast, rich, tapestried room where, in spite of figures and objects so numerous, clear spaces, wide vistas and, as they might be called, becoming situations abounded, there had been from elsewhere, at the signal of unmistakable song, a rapid accession of guests. At first he but took this in, and the way that several young women, for whom seats

had been found, looked charming in the rapt attitude; while even the men, mostly standing and grouped, "composed," in their stillness, scarce less impressively, under the sway of the divine voice. It ruled the scene, to the last intensity, and yet our young man's fine sense found still a resource in the range of the eyes, without sound or motion, while all the rest of consciousness was held down as by a hand mailed in silver. It was better, in this way, than the opera—John alertly thought of that: the composition sung might be Wagnerian, but no Tristram, no Iseult, no Parsifal and no Kundry of them all could ever show, could ever "act" to the music, as our friend had thus the power of seeing his dear contemporaries of either sex (armoured *they* so otherwise than in cheap Teutonic tinsel!) just continuously and inscrutably sit to it.

It made, the whole thing together, an enchantment amid which he had in truth, at a given moment, ceased to distinguish parts—so that he was himself certainly at last soaring as high as the singer's voice and forgetting, in a lost gaze at the splendid ceiling, everything of the occasion but what his intelligence poured into it. This, as happened, was a flight so sublime that by the time he had dropped his eyes again a cluster of persons near the main door had just parted to give way to a belated lady who slipped in, through the gap made for her, and stood for some minutes full in his view. It was a proof of the perfect hush that no one stirred to offer her a seat, and her entrance, in her high grace, had yet been so noiseless that she could remain at once immensely exposed and completely unabashed. For Berridge, once more, if the scenic show before him so melted into the music, here precisely might have been the heroine herself advancing to the footlights at her cue. The interest deepened to a thrill, and everything, at the touch of his recognition of this personage, absolutely the most beautiful woman now present, fell exquisitely together and gave him what he had been wanting from the moment of his taking in his young Englishman.

It was there, the missing connection: her arrival had on the instant lighted it by a flash. Olympian herself, supremely, divinely Olympian, she had arrived, could *only* have arrived, for the one person present of really equal race, our young man's late converser, whose flattering demonstration might now stand for one of the odd extravagant forms taken by nervous impatience. This charming, this dazzling woman had been one member of the couple disturbed, to his intimate conviction, the autumn previous, on his being pushed by the officials, at the last moment, into a compartment of the train that was to take

him from Cremona to Mantua—where, failing a stop, he had had to keep his place. The other member, by whose felt but unseized identity he had been haunted, was the unconsciously insolent form of guaranteed happiness he had just been engaged with. The sense of the admirable intimacy that, having taken its precautions, had not reckoned with his irruption—this image had remained with him; to say nothing of the interest of aspect of the associated figures, so stamped somehow with rarity, so beautifully distinct from the common occupants of padded corners, and yet on the subject of whom, for the romantic structure he was immediately to raise, he had not had a scrap of evidence.

If he had imputed to them conditions it was all his own doing: it came from his inveterate habit of abysmal imputation, the snatching of the ell wherever the inch peeped out, without which where would have been the tolerability of life? It didn't matter now what he had imputed—and he always held that his expenses of imputation were, at the worst, a compliment to those inspiring them. It only mattered that each of the pair had been then what he really saw each now—full, that is, of the pride of their youth and beauty and fortune and freedom, though at the same time particularly preoccupied: preoccupied, that is, with the affairs, and above all with the passions, of Olympus. Who had they been, and what? Whence had they come, whither were they bound, what tie united them, what adventure engaged, what felicity, tempered by what peril, magnificently, dramatically attended? These had been his questions, all so inevitable and so impertinent, at the time, and to the exclusion of any scruples over his not postulating an inane honeymoon, his not taking the "tie," as he should doubtless properly have done, for the mere blest matrimonial; and he now retracted not one of them, flushing as they did before him again with their old momentary life. To feel his two friends renewedly in presence—friends of the fleeting hour though they had but been, and with whom he had exchanged no sign save the vaguest of salutes on finally relieving them of his company—was only to be conscious that he hadn't, on the spot, done them, so to speak, half justice, and that, for his superior entertainment, there would be ever so much more of them to come.

II

It might already have been coming indeed, with an immense stride, when, scarce more than ten minutes later, he was aware

that the distinguished stranger had brought the Princess straight across the room to speak to him. He had failed in the interval of any glimpse of their closer meeting; for the great tenor had sung another song and then stopped, immediately on which Madame Gloriani had made his pulse quicken to a different, if not to a finer, throb by hovering before him once more with the man in the world he most admired, as it were, looking at him over her shoulder. The man in the world he most admired, the greatest then of contemporary Dramatists—and bearing, independently, the name inscribed if not in deepest incision at least in thickest gilding on the rich recreative roll—this prodigious personage was actually to suffer "presentation" to him at the good lady's generous but ineffectual hands, and had in fact the next instant, left alone with him, bowed, in formal salutation, the massive, curly, witty head, so "romantic" yet so modern, so "artistic" and ironic yet somehow so civic, so Gallic yet somehow so cosmic, his personal vision of which had not hitherto transcended that of the possessor of a signed and framed photograph in a consecrated quarter of a writing-table.

It was positive, however, that poor John was afterwards to remember of this conjunction nothing whatever but the fact of the great man's looking at him very hard, straight in the eyes, and of his not having himself scrupled to do as much, and with a confessed intensity of appetite. It was improbable, he was to recognise, that they had, for the few minutes, only stared and grimaced, like pitted boxers or wrestlers; but what had abode with him later on, none the less, was just the cherished memory of his not having so lost presence of mind as to fail of feeding on his impression. It was precious and precarious, that was perhaps all there would be of it; and his subsequent consciousness was quite to cherish this queer view of the silence, neither awkward nor empty nor harsh, but on the contrary quite charged and brimming, that represented for him his use, his unforgettable enjoyment in fact, of his opportunity. Had nothing passed in words? Well, no misery of murmured "homage," thank goodness; though something must have been said, certainly, to lead up, as they put it at the theatre, to John's having asked the head of the profession, before they separated, if he by chance knew who the so radiantly handsome young woman might be, the one who had so lately come in and who wore the pale yellow dress, of the strange tone, and the magnificent pearls. They must have separated soon, it was further to have been noted; since it was before the advance of the pair, their wonderful dazzling charge upon him, that he had distinctly seen the great

man, at a distance again, block out from his sight the harmony of the faded gold and the pearls—to speak only of that—and plant himself there (the mere high Atlas-back of renown to Berridge now) as for communion with them. He had blocked everything out, to this tune, effectually; with nothing of the matter left for our friend meanwhile but that, as he had said, the beautiful lady was the Princess. What Princess, or the Princess of what?—our young man had afterwards wondered; his companion's reply having lost itself in the prelude of an outburst by another vocalist who had approached the piano.

It was after these things that she so incredibly came to him, attended by her adorer—since he took it for absolute that the young Lord was her adorer, as who indeed mightn't be?—and scarce waiting, in her bright simplicity, for any form of introduction. It may thus be said in a word that this was the manner in which she made our hero's acquaintance, a satisfaction that she on the spot described to him as really wanting of late to her felicity. "I've read everything, you know, and 'The Heart of Gold' three times": she put it all immediately on that ground, while the young Lord now smiled, beside her, as if it were quite the sort of thing he had done too; and while, further, the author of the work yielded to the consciousness that whereas in general he had come at last scarce to be able to bear the iteration of those words, which affected him as a mere vain vocal convulsion, so not a breath of this association now attended them, so such a person as the Princess could make of them what she would. Unless it was to be really what *he* would!—this occurred to him in the very thick of the prodigy, no single shade of possibility of which was less prodigious than any other. It was a declaration, simply, the admirable young woman was treating him to, a profession of "artistic sympathy"—for she was in a moment to use this very term that made for them a large, clear, common ether, an element all uplifted and rare, of which they could equally partake.

If she was Olympian—as in her rich and regular young beauty, that of some divine Greek mask over-painted say by Titian, she more and more appeared to him—this offered air was that of the gods themselves: she might have been, with her long rustle across the room, Artemis decorated, hung with pearls, for her worshippers, yet disconcerting them by having, under an impulse just faintly fierce, snatched the cup of gold from Hebe. It was to him, John Berridge, she thus publicly offered it; and it was his over-topping *confrère* of shortly before who was the worshipper most disconcerted. John had happened to catch,

even at its distance, after these friends had joined him, the momentary deep, grave estimate, in the great Dramatist's salient watching eyes, of the Princess's so singular performance : the touch perhaps this, in the whole business, that made Berridge's sense of it most sharp. The sense of it as *prodigy* didn't in the least entail his feeling abject—any more, that is, than in the due dazzled degree ; for surely there would have been supreme wonder in the eagerness of her exchange of mature glory for thin notoriety, hadn't it still exceeded everything that an Olympian of such race should have found herself bothered, as they said, to " read " at all—and most of all to read three times !

With the turn the matter took as an effect of this meeting, Berridge was more than once to find himself almost ashamed for her—since it seemed never to occur to her to be so for herself : he was jealous of the type where she might have been taken as insolently careless of it ; his advantage (unless indeed it had been his ruin) being that he could inordinately reflect upon it, could wander off thereby into kinds of licence of which she was incapable. He hadn't, for himself, waited till now to be sure of what he would do were *he* an Olympian : he would leave his own stuff snugly unread, to begin with : that would be a beautiful start for an Olympian career. He should have been as unable to write those works in short as to make anything else of them ; and he should have had no more arithmetic for computing fingers than any perfect-headed marble Apollo mutilated at the wrists. He should have consented to know but the grand personal adventure on the grand personal basis : nothing short of this, no poor cognisance of confusable, pettifogging things, the sphere of earth-grubbing questions and twopenny issues, would begin to be, on any side, Olympian enough.

Even the great Dramatist, with his tempered and tested steel and his immense " assured " position, even he was not Olympian : the look, full of the torment of earth, with which he had seen the Princess turn her back, and for such a purpose, on the prized privilege of his notice, testified sufficiently to that. Still, comparatively, it was to be said, the question of a personal relation with an authority so eminent on the subject of the passions—to say nothing of the rest of his charm—might have had for an ardent young woman (and the Princess was unmistakably ardent) the absolute attraction of romance : unless, again, prodigy of prodigies, she were looking for her romance very particularly elsewhere. Yet where could she have been looking for it, Berridge was to ask himself with private intensity, in a manner to leave her so at her ease for appearing to offer *him*

everything ?—so free to be quite divinely gentle with him, to hover there before him in all her mild, bright, smooth sublimity and to say : "I should be so very grateful if you'd come to see me."

There succeeded this a space of time of which he was afterwards to lose all account, was never to recover the history ; his only coherent view of it being that an interruption, some incident that kept them a while separate, had then taken place, yet that during their separation, of half an hour or whatever, they had still somehow not lost sight of each other, but had found their eyes meeting, in deep communion, all across the great peopled room ; meeting and wanting to meet, wanting—it was the most extraordinary thing in the world for the suppression of stages, for confessed precipitate intensity—to use together every instant of the hour that might be left them. Yet to use it for what ?—unless, like beautiful fabulous figures in some old-world legend, for the frankest and almost the crudest avowal of the impression they had made on each other. He couldn't have named, later on, any other person she had during this space been engaged with, any more than he was to remember in the least what he had himself ostensibly done, who had spoken to him, whom he had spoken to, or whether he hadn't just stood and publicly gaped or languished.

Ah, Olympians were unconventional indeed—that was a part of their high bravery and privilege ; but what it also appeared to attest in this wondrous manner was that they could communicate to their chosen in three minutes, by the mere light of their eyes, the same shining cynicism. He was to wonder of course, tinglingly enough, whether he had really made an ass of himself, and there was this amount of evidence for it that there certainly *had* been a series of moments each one of which glowed with the lucid sense that, as she couldn't like him as much as *that* either for his acted clap-trap or for his printed verbiage, what it must come to was that she liked him, and to such a tune, just for himself and quite after no other fashion than that in which every goddess in the calendar had, when you came to look, sooner or later liked some prepossessing young shepherd. The question would thus have been, for him, with a still sharper eventual ache, of whether he positively *had*, as an effect of the miracle, been petrified, before fifty pair of eyes, to the posture of a prepossessing shepherd—and would perhaps have left him under the shadow of some such imputable fatuity if his consciousness hadn't, at a given moment, cleared up to still stranger things.

The agent of the change was, as quite congruously happened, none other than the shining youth whom he now seemed to himself to have been thinking of for ever so long, for a much longer time than he had ever in his life spent at an evening party, as the young Lord: which personage suddenly stood before him again, holding him up an odd object and smiling, as if in reference to it, with a gladness that at once struck our friend as almost too absurd for belief. The object was incongruous by reason of its being, to a second and less preoccupied glance, a book; and what had befallen Berridge within twenty minutes was that they—the Princess and he, that is—had got such millions of miles, or at least such thousands of years, away from *those* platitudes. The book, he found himself assuming, could only be *his* book (it seemed also to have a tawdry red cover); and there came to him memories, dreadfully false notes sounded so straight again by his new acquaintance, of certain altogether different persons who at certain altogether different parties had flourished volumes before him very much with that insinuating gesture, that arch expression and that fell intention. The meaning of these things—of all possible breaks of the charm at such an hour!—was that he should "signature" the ugly thing, and with a characteristic quotation or sentiment: that was the way people simpered and squirmed, the way they mouthed and beckoned, when animated by such purposes; and it already, on the spot, almost broke his heart to see such a type as that of the young Lord brought, by the vulgarest of fashions, so low. This state of quick displeasure in Berridge, however, was founded on a deeper question—the question of how in the world he was to remain for himself a prepossessing shepherd if he should consent to come back to these base actualities. It was true that even while this wonderment held him, his aggressor's perfect good conscience had placed the matter in a slightly different light.

"By an extraordinary chance I've found a copy of my friend's novel on one of the tables here—I see by the inscription that she has presented it to Gloriani. So if you'd like to glance at it——!" And the young Lord, in the pride of his association with the eminent thing, held it out to Berridge as artlessly as if it had been a striking natural specimen of some sort, a rosy round apple grown in his own orchard, or an exceptional precious stone, to be admired for its weight and lustre. Berridge accepted the offer mechanically—relieved at the prompt fading of his worst fear, yet feeling in himself a tell-tale facial blankness for the still absolutely anomalous character of his friend's appeal. He was

even tempted for a moment to lay the volume down without looking at it—only with some extemporised promise to borrow it of their host and take it home, to give himself to it at an easier moment. Then the very expression of his fellow-guest's own countenance determined in him a different and a still more dreadful view; in fact an immediate collapse of the dream in which he had for the splendid previous space of time been living. The young Lord himself, in his radiant costly barbarism, figured far better than John Berridge could do the prepossessing shepherd, the beautiful mythological mortal "distinguished" by a goddess; for our hero now saw that his whole manner of dealing with his ridiculous tribute was marked exactly by the grand simplicity, the prehistoric good faith, as one might call it, of far-off romantic and "plastic" creatures, figures of exquisite Arcadian stamp, glorified rustics like those of the train of peasants in "A Winter's Tale," who thought nothing of such treasure-trove, on a Claude Lorrain sea-strand, as a royal infant wrapped in purple: something in that fabulous style of exhibition appearing exactly what his present demonstration might have been prompted by.

"The Top of the Tree, by Amy Evans"—scarce credible words floating before Berridge after he had with an anguish of effort dropped his eyes on the importunate title-page—represented an object as alien to the careless grace of goddess-haunted Arcady as a washed-up "kodak" from a wrecked ship might have been to the appreciation of some islander of wholly unvisited seas. Nothing could have been more in the tone of an islander deplorably diverted from his native interests and dignities than the glibness with which John's own child of nature went on. "It's her pen-name, Amy Evans"—he couldn't have said it otherwise had he been a blue-chinned penny-a-liner—yet marking it with a disconnectedness of intelligence that kept up all the poetry of his own situation and only crashed into that of other persons. The reference put the author of "The Heart of Gold" quite into *his* place, but left the speaker absolutely free of Arcady. "Thanks awfully"—Berridge somehow clutched at that, to keep everything from swimming. "Yes, I should like to look at it," he managed, horribly grimacing now, he believed, to say; and there was in fact a strange short interlude after this in which he scarce knew what had become of any one or of anything; in which he only seemed to himself to stand alone in a desolate place where even its desolation didn't save him from having to stare at the greyest of printed pages. Nothing here helped anything else, since the stamped greyness didn't even in itself

make it impossible his eyes should follow such sentences as: "The loveliness of the face, which was that of the glorious period in which Pheidias reigned supreme, and which owed its most exquisite note to that shell-like curl of the upper lip which always somehow recalls for us the smile with which wind-blown Astarte must have risen from the salt sea to which she owed her birth and her terrible moods"; or "It was too much for all the passionate woman in her, and she let herself go, over the flowering land that had been, but was no longer their love, with an effect of blighting desolation that might have proceeded from one of the more physical, though not more awful, convulsions of nature."

He seemed to know later on that other and much more natural things had occurred; as that, for instance, with now at last a definite intermission of the rare music that for a long time past, save at the briefest intervals, had kept all participants ostensibly attentive and motionless, and that in spite of its high quality and the supposed privilege of listening to it he had allowed himself not to catch a note of, there was a great rustling and shifting and vociferous drop to a lower plane, more marked still with the quick clearance of a way to supper and a lively dispersal of most of the guests. Hadn't he made out, through the queer glare of appearances, though they yet somehow all came to him as confused and unreal, that the Princess was no longer there, wasn't even only crowded out of his range by the immediate multiplication of her court, the obsequious court that the change of pitch had at once permitted to close round her; that Gloriani had offered her his arm, in a gallant official way, as to the greatest lady present, and that he was left with half a dozen persons more knowing than the others, who had promptly taken, singly or in couples, to a closer inspection of the fine small scattered treasures of the studio?

He himself stood there, rueful and stricken, nursing a silly red-bound book under his arm very much as if he might have been holding on tight to an upright stake, or to the nearest piece of furniture, during some impression of a sharp earthquake-shock or of an attack of dyspeptic dizziness; albeit indeed that he wasn't conscious of this absurd, this instinctive nervous clutch till the thing that was to be more wonderful than any yet suddenly flared up for him—the sight of the Princess again on the threshold of the room, poised there an instant, in her exquisite grace, for recovery of some one or of something, and then, at recognition of him, coming straight to him across the empty place as if he alone, and nobody and nothing else, were

what she incredibly wanted. She was there, she was radiantly *at* him, as if she had known and loved him for ten years—ten years during which, however, she had never quite been able, in spite of undiscouraged attempts, to cure him, as goddesses *had* to cure shepherds, of his mere mortal shyness.

"Ah no, not *that* one!" she said at once, with her divine familiarity; for she had in the flash of an eye "spotted" the particular literary production he seemed so very fondly to have possessed himself of and against which all the Amy Evans in her, as she would doubtless have put it, clearly wished on the spot to discriminate. She pulled it away from him; he let it go; he scarce knew what was happening—only made out that she distinguished the right one, the one that should have been shown him, as blue or green or purple, and intimated that her other friend, her fellow-Olympian, as Berridge had thought of him from the first, really did too clumsily bungle matters, poor dear, with his officiousness over the red one! She went on really as if she had come for that, some such rectification, some such eagerness of reunion with dear Mr. Berridge, some talk, after all the tiresome music, of questions really urgent; while, thanks to the supreme strangeness of it, the high tide of golden fable floated him afresh, and her pretext and her plea, the queerness of her offered motive, melted away after the fashion of the enveloping clouds that do their office in epics and idylls.

"You didn't perhaps know I'm Amy Evans," she smiled, "or even perhaps that I write in English—which I love, I assure you, as much as you can yourself do, and which gives one (doesn't it? for who should know if not you?) the biggest of publics. I 'just love'—don't they say?—your American millions; and all the more that they really *take* me for Amy Evans, as I've just wanted to be taken, to be loved too for myself, don't you know?—that they haven't seemed to try at all to 'go behind' (don't you say?) my poor dear little *nom de guerre*. But it's the new one, my last, 'The Velvet Glove,' that I should like you to judge me by—if such a *corvée* isn't too horrible for you to think of; though I admit it's a move straight in the romantic direction—since after all (for I might as well make a clean breast of it) it's dear old discredited romance that I'm most in sympathy with. I'll send you 'The Velvet Glove' to-morrow, if you *can* find half an hour for it; and then—and *then*——!" She paused as for the positive bright glory of her meaning.

It could only be so extraordinary, her meaning, whatever it was, that the need in him that would—whatever it was again!

—meet it most absolutely formed the syllables on his lips as: "Will you be very, *very* kind to me?"

"Ah 'kind,' dear Mr. Berridge? 'Kind,'" she splendidly laughed, "is nothing to what——!" But she pulled herself up again an instant. "Well, to what I want to be! Just *see*," she said, "how I want to be!" It was exactly, he felt, what he couldn't *but* see—in spite of books and publics and pen-names, in spite of the really "decadent" perversity, recalling that of the most irresponsibly insolent of the old Romans and Byzantines, that could lead a creature so formed for living and breathing her Romance, and so committed, up to the eyes, to the constant fact of her personal immersion in it and genius for it, the dreadful amateurish dance of ungrammatically scribbling it, with editions and advertisements and reviews and royalties and every other futile item: since what was more of the deep essence of throbbing intercourse itself than this very act of her having broken away from people, in the other room, to whom he was as nought, of her having, with her *crânerie* of audacity and indifference, just turned her back on them all as soon as she had begun to miss him? What was more of it than her having forbidden them, by a sufficient curt ring of her own supremely silver tone, to attempt to check or criticise her freedom, than her having looked him up, at his distance, under all the noses he had put out of joint, so as to let them think whatever they might—not of herself (much she troubled to care!) but of the new champion to be reckoned with, the invincible young lion of the day? What was more of it in short than her having perhaps even positively snubbed for him the great mystified Sculptor and the great bewildered Dramatist, treated to this queer experience for the first time of their lives?

It all came back again to the really great ease of really great ladies, and to the perfect facility of everything when once they were great enough. *That* might become the delicious thing to him, he more and more felt, as soon as it should be supremely attested; it was ground he had ventured on, scenically, representationally, in the artistic sphere, but without ever dreaming he should "realise" it thus in the social. Handsomely, gallantly just now, moreover, he didn't so much as let it occur to him that the social experience would perhaps on some future occasion richly profit further scenic efforts; he only lost himself in the consciousness of all she invited him to believe. It took licence, this consciousness, the next moment, for a tremendous further throb, from what she had gone on to say to him in so many words—though indeed the words were nothing and it

was all a matter but of the implication that glimmered through them: "Do you *want* very much your supper here?" And then while he felt himself glare, for charmed response, almost to the point of his tears rising with it: "Because if you don't——!"

"Because if I don't——?" She had paused, not from the faintest shade of timidity, but clearly for the pleasure of making him press.

"Why shouldn't we go together, letting me drive you home?"

"You'll come home with me?" gasped John Berridge while the perspiration on his brow might have been the morning dew on a high lawn of Mount Ida.

"No—you had better come with *me*. That's what I mean; but I certainly will come to you with pleasure some time if you'll let me."

She made no more than that of the most fatuous of freedoms, as he felt directly he had spoken that it might have seemed to her; and before he had even time to welcome the relief of not having then himself, for beastly contrition, to make more of it, she had simply mentioned, with her affectionate ease, that she wanted to get away, that of the bores there she might easily, after a little, have too much, and that if he'd but say the word they'd nip straight out together by an independent door and be sure to find her motor in the court. What word he had found to say, he was afterwards to reflect, must have little enough mattered; for he was to have kept, of what then occurred, but a single other impression, that of her great fragrant rustle beside him over the rest of the ample room and toward their nearest and friendliest resource, the door by which he had come in and which gave directly upon a staircase. This independent image was just that of the only other of his fellow-guests with whom he had been closely concerned; he had thought of him rather indeed, up to that moment, as the Princess's fellow-Olympian—but a new momentary vision of him seemed now to qualify it.

The young Lord had reappeared within a minute on the threshold, that of the passage from the supper-room, lately crossed by the Princess herself, and Berridge felt him there, saw him there, wondered about him there, all, for the first minute, without so much as a straight look at him. He would have come to learn the reason of his friend's extraordinary public demonstration—having more right to his curiosity, or his anxiety or whatever, than any one else; he would be taking in the remarkable appearances that thus completed it, and would

perhaps be showing quite a different face for them, at the point they had reached, than any that would have hitherto consorted with the beautiful security of his own position. So much, on our own young man's part, for this first flush of a presumption that he might have stirred the germs of ire in a celestial breast; so much for the moment during which nothing would have induced him to betray, to a possibly rueful member of an old aristocracy, a vulgar elation or a tickled, unaccustomed glee. His inevitable second thought was, however, it has to be confessed, another matter, which took a different turn—for, frankly, all the conscious conqueror in him, as Amy Evans would again have said, couldn't forego a probably supreme consecration. He treated himself to no prolonged reach of vision, but there was something he nevertheless fully measured for five seconds—the sharp truth of the fact, namely, of how the interested observer in the doorway must really have felt about him. Rather disconcertingly, hereupon, the sharp truth proved to be that the most amused, quite the most encouraging and the least invidious of smiles graced the young Lord's handsome countenance—forming, in short, his final contribution to a display of high social candour unprecedented in our hero's experience. No, he wasn't jealous, didn't do John Berridge the honour to be, to the extent of the least glimmer of a spark of it, but was so happy to see his immortal mistress do what she liked that he could positively beam at the odd circumstance of her almost lavishing public caresses on a gentlemen not, after all, of negligible importance.

III

Well, it was all confounding enough, but this indication in particular would have jostled our friend's grasp of the presented cup had he had, during the next ten minutes, more independence of thought. That, however, was out of the question when one positively felt, as with a pang somewhere deep within, as even with a smothered cry for alarm, one's whole sense of proportion shattered at a blow and ceasing to serve. "Not *straight*, and not too fast, shall we?" was the ineffable young woman's appeal to him, a few minutes later, beneath the wide glass porch-cover that sheltered their brief wait for their chariot of fire. It was there even as she spoke; the capped charioteer, with a great clean curve, drew up at the steps of the porch, and the Princess's footman, before rejoining him in front, held open the door of the car. She got in, and Berridge was the next instant beside her; he could only say: "As you like, Princess—where you will;

certainly let us prolong it; let us prolong everything; don't let us have it over—strange and beautiful as it can only be!—a moment sooner than we must." So he spoke, in the security of their intimate English, while the perpendicular imperturbable *valet-de-pied*, white-faced in the electric light, closed them in and then took his place on the box where the rigid liveried backs of the two men, presented through the glass, were like a protecting wall; such a guarantee of privacy as might come—it occurred to Berridge's inexpugnable fancy—from a vision of tall guards erect round eastern seraglios.

His companion had said something, by the time they started, about their taking a turn, their looking out for a few of the night-views of Paris that were so wonderful; and after that, in spite of his constantly prized sense of knowing his enchanted city and his way about, he ceased to follow or measure their course, content as he was with the particular exquisite assurance it gave him. *That* was knowing Paris, of a wondrous bland April night; that was hanging over it from vague consecrated lamp-studded heights and taking in, spread below and afar, the great scroll of all its irresistible story, pricked out, across river and bridge and radiant *place*, and along quays and boulevards and avenues, and around monumental circles and squares, in syllables of fire, and sketched and summarised, further and further, in the dim fire-dust of endless avenues; that was all of the essence of fond and thrilled and throbbing recognition, with a thousand things understood and a flood of response conveyed, a whole familiar possessive feeling appealed to and attested.

"From you, you know, it *would* be such a pleasure, and I think—in fact I'm sure—it would do so much for the thing in America." Had she gone on as they went, or had there been pauses of easy and of charmed and of natural silence, breaks and drops from talk, but only into greater confidence and sweetness?—such as her very gesture now seemed a part of; her laying her gloved hand, for emphasis, on the back of his own, which rested on his knee and which took in from the act he scarce knew what melting assurance. The emphasis, it was true—this came to him even while for a minute he held his breath—seemed rather that of Amy Evans; and if her talk, while they rolled, had been in the sense of these words (he had really but felt that they were shut intimately in together, all his consciousness, all his discrimination of meanings and indications being so deeply and so exquisitely merged in that) the case wasn't as surely and sublimely, as extravagantly, as fabulously romantic for him as his excited pulses had been seeming to certify.

Her hand was there on his own, in precious living proof, and splendid Paris hung over them, as a consecrating canopy, her purple night embroidered with gold ; yet he waited, something stranger still having glimmered for him, waited though she left her hand, which expressed emphasis and homage and tenderness, and anything else she liked indeed—since it was all then a matter of what he next heard and what he slowly grew cold as he took from her.

"You know they do it here so charmingly—it's a compliment a clever man is always so glad to pay a literary friend, and sometimes, in the case of a great name like yours, it renders such a service to a poor little book like mine!" She spoke ever so humbly and yet ever so gaily—and still more than before with this confidence of the sincere admirer and the comrade. That, yes, through his sudden sharpening chill, was what first became distinct for him ; she was mentioning somehow her explanation and her conditions—her motive, in fine, disconcerting, deplorable, dreadful, in respect to the experience, otherwise so boundless, that he had taken her as having opened to him ; and she was doing it, above all, with the clearest coolness of her general privilege. What in particular she was talking about he as yet, still holding his breath, wondered ; it was something she wanted him to do for her—which was exactly what he had hoped, but something of what trivial and, heaven forgive them both, of what dismal order ? Most of all, meanwhile, he felt the dire penetration of two or three of the words she had used ; so that after a painful minute the quaver with which he repeated them resembled his drawing, slowly, carefully, timidly, some barbed dart out of his flesh.

"A 'literary friend'?" he echoed as he turned his face more to her ; so that, as they sat, the whites of her eyes, near to his own, gleamed in the dusk like some silver setting of deep sapphires.

It made her smile—which in their relation now was like the breaking of a cool air-wave over the conscious sore flush that maintained itself through his general chill. "Ah of course you don't allow that I *am* literary—and of course if you're awfully cruel and critical and incorruptible you won't let it say for me what I so want it should!"

"Where are we, where, in the name of all that's damnably, of all that's grotesquely delusive, are we ?" he said, without a sign, to himself ; which was the form of his really being quite at sea as to what she was talking about. That uncertainty indeed he could but frankly betray by taking her up, as he cast about

him, on the particular ambiguity that his voice perhaps already showed him to find most irritating. "Let *it* show? 'It,' dear Princess——?"

"Why, my dear man, let your Preface show, the lovely, friendly, irresistible log-rolling Preface that I've been asking you if you wouldn't be an angel and write for me."

He took it in with a deep long gulp—he had never, it seemed to him, had to swallow anything so bitter. "You've been asking me if I wouldn't write you a Preface?"

"To 'The Velvet Glove'—after I've sent it to you and you've judged if you really can. Of course I don't want you to perjure yourself; but"—and she fairly brushed him again, at their close quarters, with her fresh fragrant smile—"I do want you so to like me, and to say it all out beautifully and publicly."

"You want me to like you, Princess?"

"But, heaven help us, haven't you understood?"

Nothing stranger could conceivably have been, it struck him—if he was right now—than this exquisite intimacy of her manner of setting him down on the other side of an abyss. It was as if she had lifted him first in her beautiful arms, had raised him up high, high, high, to do it, pressing him to her immortal young breast while he let himself go, and then, by some extraordinary effect of her native force and her alien quality, setting him down exactly where she wanted him to be—which was a thousand miles away from her. Once more, so preposterously face to face with her for these base issues, he took it all in; after which he felt his eyes close, for amazement, despair and shame, and his head, which he had some time before, baring his brow to the mild night, eased of its crush-hat, sink to confounded rest on the upholstered back of the seat. The act, the ceasing to see, and if possible to hear, was for the moment a retreat, an escape from a state that he felt himself fairly flatter by thinking of it as "awkward"; the state of really wishing that his humiliation might end, and of wondering in fact if the most decent course open to him mightn't be to ask her to stop the motor and let him down.

He spoke no word for a long minute, or for considerably more than that; during which time the motor went and went, now even somewhat faster, and he knew, through his closed eyes, that the outer lights had begun to multiply and that they were getting back somewhere into the spacious and decorative quarters. He knew this, and also that his retreat, for all his attitude as of accommodating thought, his air—*that* presently and quickly came to him—of having perhaps gathered himself in,

for an instant, at her behest, to turn over, in his high ingenuity, some humbugging "rotten" phrase or formula that he might place at her service and make the note of such an effort; he became aware, I say, that his lapse was but a half-retreat, with her strenuous presence and her earnest pressure and the close cool respiration of her good faith absolutely timing the moments of his stillness and the progress of the car. Yes, it was wondrous well, he had all but made the biggest of all fools of himself, almost as big a one as *she* was still, to every appearance, in her perfect serenity, trying to make of him, and the one straight answer to it *would* be that he should reach forward and touch the footman's shoulder and demand that the vehicle itself should make an end.

That would be an answer, however, he continued intensely to see, only to inanely importunate, to utterly superfluous Amy Evans—not a bit to his at last exquisitely patient companion, who was clearly now quite taking it from him that what kept him in his attitude was the spring of the quick desire to oblige her, the charming loyal impulse to consider a little what he could do for her, say "handsomely yet conscientiously" (oh the loveliness!) before he should commit himself. She was enchanted—*that* seemed to breathe upon him; she waited, she hung there, she quite bent over him, as Diana over the sleeping Endymion, while all the conscientious man of letters in him, as she might so supremely have phrased it, struggled with the more peccable, the more muddled and "squared," though, for her own ideal, the so much more *banal* comrade. Yes, he could keep it up now—that is he could hold out for his real reply, could meet the rather marked tension of the rest of their passage as well as she; he should be able somehow or other to make his wordless detachment, the tribute of his ostensibly deep consideration of her request, a retreat in good order. She *was*, for herself, to the last point of her guileless fatuity, Amy Evans and an asker for "lifts," a conceiver of twaddle both in herself and in him; or at least, so far as she fell short of all this platitude, it was no fault of the really affecting folly of her attempt to become a mere magazine mortal after the only fashion she had made out, to the intensification of her self-complacency, that she might.

Nothing might thus have touched him more—if to be touched, beyond a certain point hadn't been to be squared—than the way she failed to divine the bearing of his thoughts; so that she had probably at no one small crisis of her life felt so much a promise in the flutter of her own as on the occasion of the beautiful act she indulged in at the very moment, he was

afterwards to recognise, of their sweeping into her great smooth empty, costly street—a desert, at that hour, of lavish lamplight and sculptured stone. She raised to her lips the hand she had never yet released and kept it there a moment pressed close against them ; he himself closing his eyes to the deepest detachment he was capable of while he took in with a smothered sound of pain that this was the conferred bounty by which Amy Evans sought most expressively to encourage, to sustain and to reward. The motor had slackened and in a moment would stop ; and meanwhile even after lowering his hand again she hadn't let it go. This enabled it, while he after a further moment roused himself to a more confessed consciousness, to form with his friend's a more active relation, to possess him of hers, in turn, and with an intention the straighter that her glove had by this time somehow come off. Bending over it without hindrance, he returned as firmly and fully as the application of all his recovered wholeness of feeling, under his moustache, might express, the consecration the bareness of his own knuckles had received ; only after which it was that, still thus drawing out his grasp of her, and having let down their front glass by his free hand, he signified to the footman his view of their stopping short.

They had arrived ; the high, closed *porte-cochère*, in its crested stretch of wall, awaited their approach ; but his gesture took effect, the car pulled up at the edge of the pavement, the man, in an instant, was at the door and had opened it ; quickly moving across the walk, the next moment, to press the bell at the gate. Berridge, as his hand now broke away, felt he had cut his cable ; with which, after he had stepped out, he raised again the glass he had lowered and closed, its own being already down, the door that had released him. During these motions he had the sense of his companion, still radiant and splendid, but somehow momentarily suppressed, suspended, silvered over and celestially blurred, even as a summer moon by the loose veil of a cloud. So it was he saw her while he leaned for farewell on the open window-ledge ; he took her in as her visible intensity of bright vagueness filled the circle that the interior of the car made for her. It was such a state as she would have been reduced to—he felt this, was certain of it—for the first time in her life ; and it was he, poor John Berridge, after all, who would have created the condition.

"Good-night, Princess. I sha'n't see you again."

Vague was indeed no word for it—shine though she might, in her screened narrow niche, as with the liquefaction of her pearls,

the glimmer of her tears, the freshness of her surprise. "You won't come in—when you've had no supper?"

He smiled at her with a purpose of kindness that could never in his life have been greater; and at first but smiled without a word. He presently shook his head, however—doubtless also with as great a sadness. "I seem to have supped to my fill, Princess. Thank you, I won't come in."

It drew from her, while she looked at him, a long low anxious wail. "And you won't do my Preface?"

"No, Princess, I won't do your Preface. Nothing would induce me to say a word in print about you. I'm in fact not sure I shall ever mention you in any manner at all as long as ever I live."

He had felt for an instant as if he were speaking to some miraculously humanised idol, all sacred, all jewelled, all votively hung about, but made mysterious, in the recess of its shrine, by the very thickness of the accumulated lustre. And "Then you don't like me——?" was the marvellous sound from the image.

"Princess," was in response the sound of the worshipper, "Princess, I adore you. But I'm ashamed for you."

"Ashamed——?"

"You *are* Romance—as everything, and by what I make out every one, about you is; so what more do you want? Your Preface—the only one worth speaking of—was written long ages ago by the most beautiful imagination of man."

Humanised at least for these moments, she could understand enough to declare that she didn't. "I don't, I don't!"

"You don't need to understand. Don't attempt such base things. Leave those to us. Only live. Only be. *We'll* do the rest."

She moved over—she had come close to the window. "Ah, but Mr. Berridge——!"

He raised both hands; he shook them at her gently, in deep and soft deprecation. "Don't sound my dreadful name. Fortunately, however, you can't help yourself."

"Ah, *voyons!* I so want——!"

He repeated his gesture, and when he brought down his hands they closed together on both of hers, which now quite convulsively grasped the window-ledge. "Don't speak, because when you speak you really say things——! You *are* Romance," he pronounced afresh and with the last intensity of conviction and persuasion. "That's all you have to do with it," he continued while his hands, for emphasis, pressed hard on her own.

Their faces, in this way, were nearer together than ever, but

with the effect of only adding to the vividness of that dire non-intelligence from which, all perversely and incalculably, her very beauty now appeared to gain relief. This made for him a pang and almost an anguish; the fear of her saying something yet again that would wretchedly prove how little he moved her perception. So his eyes, of remonstrant, of suppliant intention, met hers close, at the same time that these, so far from shrinking, but with their quite other swimming plea all bedimmed now, seemed almost to wash him with the tears of her failure. He soothed, he stroked, he reassured her hands, for tender conveyance of his meaning, quite as she had just before dealt with his own for brave demonstration of hers. It was during these instants as if the question had been which of them *could* most candidly and fraternally plead. Full but of that she kept it up. "Ah, if you'd only think, if you'd only try——!"

He couldn't stand it—she was capable of believing he had edged away, excusing himself and trumping up a factitious theory, because he hadn't the wit, hadn't the hand, to knock off the few pleasant pages she asked him for and that any proper Frenchman, master of the *métier*, would so easily and gallantly have promised. Should she so begin to commit herself he'd, by the immortal gods, anticipate it in the manner most admirably effective—in fact he'd even thus make her further derogation impossible. Their faces were so close that he could practise any rich freedom—even though for an instant, while the back of the chauffeur guarded them on that side and his own presented breadth, amplified by his loose mantle, filled the whole window-space, leaving him no observation from any quarter to heed, he uttered, in a deep-drawn final groan, an irrepressible echo of his pang for what might have been, the muffled cry of his insistence. "You *are* Romance!"—he drove it intimately, inordinately home, his lips, for a long moment, sealing it, with the fullest force of authority, on her own; after which, as he broke away and the car, starting again, turned powerfully across the pavement, he had no further sound from her than if, all divinely indulgent but all humanly defeated, she had given the question up, falling back to infinite wonder. He too fell back, but could still wave his hat for her as she passed to disappearance in the great floridly-framed aperture whose wings at once came together behind her.

Some Reminiscences

By Joseph Conrad

IV

It must not be supposed that in setting forth the memories of this half-hour between the moment my uncle left my room till we met again at dinner, I am losing sight of "Almayer's Folly." Having confessed that my first novel was begun in idleness—a holiday task—I think I have also given the impression that it was a much-delayed book. It was never dismissed from my mind, even when the hope of ever finishing it was very faint. Many things came in its way: daily duties, new impressions, old memories. It was not the outcome of a need—the famous need of self-expression which artists find in their search for motives. The necessity which impelled me was a hidden, obscure necessity, a completely masked and unaccountable phenomenon. Or perhaps some idle and frivolous magician (there must be magicians in London) had cast a spell over me through his parlour window as I explored the maze of streets east and west in solitary leisurely walks without chart and compass. Till I began to write that novel I had written nothing but letters and not very many of these. I never made a note of a fact, of an impression or of an anecdote in my life. The conception of a planned book was entirely outside my mental range when I sat down to write; the ambition of being an author had never turned up amongst these gracious imaginary existences that one creates fondly for oneself at times in the stillness and immobility of a day-dream: yet it stands clear as the sun at noonday that from the moment I had done blackening over the first manuscript page of "Almayer's Folly" (it contained about two hundred words and this proportion of words to a page has remained with me through the fifteen years of my writing life), from the moment I had, in the simplicity of my heart and the amazing ignorance of my mind, written that page the die was cast. Never had Rubicon been more blindly forded, without invocation to the gods, without fear of men.

That morning I got up from my breakfast, pushing the chair back, and rang the bell violently, or perhaps I should say resolutely, or perhaps I should say eagerly, I do not know. But manifestly it must have been a special ring of the bell, a common sound made impressive, like the ringing of a bell for the raising of the curtain upon a new scene. It was an unusual thing for me to do. Generally, I dawdled over my breakfast and I seldom took the trouble to ring the bell for the table to be cleared away; but on that morning for some reason hidden in the general mysteriousness of the event I did not dawdle. And yet I was not in a hurry. I pulled the cord casually and while the faint tinkling somewhere down in the basement went on, I charged my pipe in the usual way and I looked for the matchbox with glances distraught indeed but exhibiting, I am ready to swear, no signs of a fine frenzy. I was composed enough to perceive after some considerable time the matchbox lying there on the mantelpiece right under my nose. And all this was beautifully and safely usual. Before I had thrown down the match my landlady's daughter appeared, with her calm, pale face and an inquisitive look, in the doorway. Of late it was the landlady's daughter who answered my bell. I mention this little fact with pride, because it proves that during the thirty or forty days of my tenancy I had produced a favourable impression. For a fortnight past I had been spared the unattractive sight of the domestic slave. The girls in that Bessborough Gardens house were often changed, but whether short or long, fair or dark, they were always untidy and particularly bedraggled as if in a sordid version of the fairy tale the ashbin cat had been changed into a maid. I was infinitely sensible of the privilege of being waited on by my landlady's daughter. She was neat if anæmic.

"Will you please clear away all this at once?" I addressed her in convulsive accents, being at the same time engaged in getting my pipe to draw. This, I admit, was an unusual request. Generally on getting up from breakfast I would sit down in the window with a book and let them clear the table when they liked; but if you think that on that morning I was in the least impatient, you are mistaken. I remember that I was perfectly calm. As a matter of fact I was not at all certain that I wanted to write, or that I meant to write, or that I had anything to write about. No, I was not impatient. I lounged between the mantelpiece and the window, not even consciously waiting for the table to be cleared. It was ten to one that before my landlady's daughter was done I would pick up a book and sit down with it all the morning in a spirit of enjoyable indolence. I affirm it with

assurance and I don't even know now what were the books then lying about the room. Whatever they were they were not the works of great masters, where the secret of clear thought and exact expression can be found. Since the age of five I have been a great reader, as is not perhaps wonderful in a child who was never aware of learning to read. At ten years of age I had read much of Victor Hugo and other romantics. I had read in Polish and in French, history, voyages, novels; I knew "Gil Blas" and "Don Quixote" in abridged editions; I had read Polish poets and some French poets, but I cannot say what I read on the evening before I began to write myself. I believe it was a novel and it is quite possible that it was one of Anthony Trollope's novels. It is very likely. My acquaintance with him was then very recent. He is one of the English novelists whose works I read for the first time in English. With men of European reputation, with Dickens and Walter Scott and Thackeray, it was otherwise. My first introduction to English imaginative literature was "Nicholas Nickleby." It is extraordinary how well Mrs. Nickleby could chatter disconnectedly in Polish and the sinister Ralph rage in that language; as to the Crummles family and the family of the learned Squeers it seemed as natural to them as their native speech. It was, I have no doubt, an excellent translation. This must have been in the year '70. But I really believe that I am wrong. That book was not my first introduction to English literature. My first acquaintance was (or were) the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," and that in the very MS. of my father's translation. It was during our exile in Russia, and it must have been less then a year after my mother's death, because I remember myself in the black blouse with a white border of my heavy mourning. We were living together, quite alone, in a small house on the outskirts of the town of T——. That afternoon, instead of going out to play in the large yard which we shared with our landlord, I had lingered in the room in which my father generally wrote. What emboldened me to clamber into his chair I am sure I do not know, but a couple of hours afterwards he discovered me kneeling in it with my elbows on the table and my head held in both hands over the MS. of loose pages. I was greatly confused, expecting to get into trouble. He stood in the doorway looking at me with some surprise, but the only thing he said after a moment of silence was:

"Read the page aloud."

Luckily the page lying before me was not overblotted with erasures and corrections, and my father's handwriting was other-

wise extremely legible. When I got to the end he nodded and I flew out of doors thinking myself lucky to have escaped reproof for that piece of impulsive audacity. I have tried to discover since the reason of this mildness, and I imagine that all unknown to myself I had earned, in my father's mind, the right to some latitude in my relations with his writing-table. It was only a month before, or perhaps it was only a week before, that I had read to him aloud from beginning to end, and to his perfect satisfaction, as he lay on his bed, not being very well at the time, the proofs of his translation of Victor Hugo's "Toilers of the Sea." Such was my title to consideration, I believe, and also my first introduction to the sea in literature. If I do not remember where, how and when I learned to read, I am not likely to forget the process of being trained in the art of reading aloud. My poor father, an admirable reader himself, was the most exacting of masters. I reflect proudly that I must have read that page of "Two Gentlemen of Verona" tolerably well at the age of eight. The next time I met them was in a 5*s*. one-volume edition of the dramatic works of William Shakespeare, read in Falmouth, at odd moments of the day, to the noisy accompaniment of caulkers' mallets driving oakum into the deck-seams of a ship in dry dock. We had run in, in a sinking condition and with the crew refusing duty after a month of weary battling with the gales of the North Atlantic. Books are an integral part of one's life and my Shakespearean associations are with that first year of our bereavement, the last I spent with my father in exile (he sent me away to Poland to my mother's brother directly he could brace himself up for the separation), and with the year of hard gales, the year in which I came nearest to death at sea, first by water and then by fire.

Those things I remember, but what I was reading the day before my writing life began I have forgotten. I have only a vague notion that it might have been one of Trollope's political novels. And I remember, too, the character of the day. It was an autumn day with an opaline atmosphere, a veiled, semi-opaque, lustrous day, with fiery points and flashes of red sunlight on the roofs and windows opposite, while the trees of the square with all their leaves gone were like tracings of Indian ink on a sheet of tissue paper. It was one of those London days that have the charm of mysterious amenity, of fascinating softness. The effect of opaline mist was often repeated at Bessborough Gardens on account of its nearness to the river.

There was no reason why I should remember it more on that day than on any other day, except that I stood for a long time

looking out of the window after the landlady's daughter was gone with her spoil of cups and saucers. I heard her put the tray down in the passage and finally shut the door ; and still I remained smoking with my back to the room. It is very clear that I was in no haste to take the plunge into my writing life, if as plunge this first attempt may be described. My whole being was steeped deep in the indolence of a sailor away from the sea, the scene of never-ending labour and of unceasing duty. For utter surrender to indolence you cannot beat a sailor ashore when that mood is on him, the mood of absolute irresponsibility tasted to the full. It seems to me that I thought of nothing whatever, but that is an impression which is hardly to be believed at this distance of years. What I am certain of is, that I was very far from thinking of writing a story, though it is possible and even likely that I was thinking of the man Almayer.

I had seen him for the first time some four years before from the bridge of a steamer moored to a rickety little wharf forty miles up, more or less, a Bornean river. It was very early morning and a slight mist, an opaline mist as in Bessborough Gardens only without the fiery flicks on roof and chimney-pot from the rays of the red London sun, promised to turn presently into a woolly fog. Barring a small dug-out canoe on the river there was nothing moving within sight. I had just come up yawning from my cabin. The serang and the Malay crew were overhauling the cargo chains and trying the winches ; their voices sounded subdued on the deck below and their movements were languid. That tropical daybreak was chilly. The Malay quartermaster, coming up to get something from the lockers on the bridge, shivered visibly. The forests above and below and on the opposite bank looked black and dank ; wet dripped from the rigging upon the tightly stretched deck awnings, and it was in the middle of a shuddering yawn that I caught sight of Almayer. He was moving across a patch of burnt grass, a blurred shadowy shape with the blurred bulk of a house behind him, a low house of mats, bamboos and palm-leaves with an enormous roof.

He stepped up on the jetty. He was clad simply in flapping pyjamas of cretonne pattern (enormous flowers with yellow petals on a disagreeable blue ground) and a thin cotton singlet with short sleeves. His arms, bare to the elbow, were crossed on his chest. His black hair looked as if it had not been cut for a very long time and a curly wisp of it hung across his forehead. I had heard of him at Singapore ; I had heard of him on board ; I had heard of him early in the morning and late at night ; I had heard of him at tiffin and at dinner ; I had heard of him

in a place called Pulo Laut from a half-caste gentleman there, who described himself as the manager of a coal-mine, which sounded civilised and progressive till you heard that the mine could not be worked at present because it was haunted by some particularly atrocious ghosts ; I had heard of him in a place called Dongala, in the Island of Celebes, when the Rajah of that little-known seaport (you can get no anchorage there in less than fifteen fathom, which is extremely inconvenient) came on board in a friendly way with only two attendants and drank bottle after bottle of soda-water on the after skylight with my good friend and commander, Captain C——. At least I heard his name distinctly pronounced several times in a lot of talk in Malay language. Oh yes, I heard it quite distinctly—Almayer, Almayer—and saw Captain C—— smile while the fat dingy Rajah laughed audibly. To hear a Malay Rajah laugh outright is a rare experience I can assure you. And I overheard more of Almayer's name amongst our deck passengers (mostly wandering traders of good repute) as they sat all over the ship —each man fenced round with bundles and boxes—on mats, on pillows, on quilts, on billets of wood, conversing of Island affairs. Upon my word, I heard the sound of Almayer's name faintly at midnight, while making my way aft from the bridge to look at the patent taffrail log tinkling its quarter-miles in the great silence of the sea. I don't mean to say that our passengers dreamed aloud of Almayer, but it is indubitable that two of them at least, who could not sleep apparently and were trying to charm away the trouble of insomnia by a little whispered talk at that ghostly hour, were referring in some way or other to Almayer. It was really impossible on board that ship to get away definitely from Almayer ; and a very small pony tied up forward and whisking its tail inside the galley, to the great embarrassment of our Chinaman cook, was destined for Almayer. What he wanted with a pony goodness only knows, since I am perfectly certain he could not ride it ; but here you have the man, ambitious, aiming at the grandiose, importing a pony, whereas in the whole settlement at which he used to shake daily his impotent fist there was only one path that was practicable for a pony ; a quarter of a mile at most hedged in by hundreds of square leagues of virgin forest. But who knows ? The importation of that Bali pony might have been part of some deep scheme, of some diplomatic plan, of some hopeful intrigue. With Almayer one could never tell. He governed his conduct by considerations removed from the obvious, by incredible assumptions, and this rendered his

logic impenetrable to any reasonable person. I learned all this later. That morning seeing the figure in pyjamas moving in the mist I said to myself : " That's the man."

He came quite close to the ship's side and raised a harassed countenance, round and flat, with that curl of black hair over the forehead and a heavy, pained glance.

" Good-morning."

" Good-morning."

He looked hard at me : I was a new face, having just replaced the chief mate he was accustomed to see ; and I think that this novelty inspired him, as things generally did, with a certain deep-seated mistrust.

" Didn't expect you in till this evening," he remarked suspiciously.

I don't know why he should have been aggrieved, but he seemed to be. I took pains to explain to him that having picked up the beacon at the mouth of the river just before dark and the tide serving, Captain C—— was enabled to cross the bar and there was nothing to prevent him going up the river in the dark.

" Captain C—— knows this river like his own pocket," I concluded discursively, trying to get on terms.

" Better," said Almayer.

Leaning over the rail of the bridge I looked at Almayer, who looked down at the wharf in aggrieved thought. He shuffled his feet a little ; he wore straw slippers with thick soles. The morning fog had thickened considerably. Everything round us dripped—the derricks, the rails, every single rope in the ship—as if a fit of crying had come upon the universe.

Almayer again raised his head and in the accents of a man accustomed to the buffets of evil fortune asked hardly audibly :

" I suppose you haven't such a thing as a pony for me on board ? "

I told him almost in a whisper, for he attuned my communications to a minor key, that we had such a thing as a pony, and I added, as gently as I could, that he was confoundedly in the way too. I was very anxious to have him landed before I began to handle the cargo. Almayer remained looking up at me for a long while with incredulous and melancholy eyes as though it were not a safe thing to believe my statement. This pathetic mistrust in the favourable issue in any sort of affair touched me deeply, and I added :

" He doesn't seem a bit the worse for the passage. He's a nice pony, too."

Almayer was not to be cheered up ; for all answer he cleared

his throat and looked down again at his feet. I tried to close with him on another tack.

"By Jove!" I said. "Aren't you afraid of catching pneumonia or bronchitis or something walking about in a singlet in such a wet fog?"

He was not to be propitiated by a show of interest in his health. His answer was a sinister "No fear," as much as to say that even that way of escape from an inclement fortune was closed to him.

"I just came down . . ." he mumbled after a while.

"Well then, now you're here I will land that pony for you at once and you can lead him home. I really don't want him on deck. He's in the way."

Almayer seemed doubtful. I insisted:

"Why, I will just swing him out and land him on the wharf right in front of you. I'd much rather do it before the hatches are off. The little devil may jump down the hold or do some other deadly thing."

"There's a halter?" postulated Almayer.

"Yes, of course there's a halter." And without waiting any more I leaned over the bridge rail.

"Serang, land Tuan Almayer's pony."

The cook hastened to shut the door of the galley and a moment later a great scuffle began on deck. The pony kicked with extreme energy, the kalashes skipped out of the way, the serang issued many orders in a cracked voice. Suddenly the pony leaped upon the fore-hatch. His little hoofs thundered tremendously; he plunged and reared. He had tossed his mane and his forelock into a state of amazing wildness, he dilated his nostrils, bits of foam flecked his broad little chest, his eyes blazed. He was something under eleven hands; he was fierce, terrible, angry, warlike, he said ha! ha! distinctly, he raged and thumped —and sixteen able-bodied kalashes stood round him like disconcerted nurses round a spoilt and passionate child. He whisked his tail incessantly; he arched his pretty neck; he was perfectly delightful; he was charmingly naughty. There was not an atom of vice in that performance; no savage baring of the teeth and laying back of ears. On the contrary, he pricked them forward in a comically aggressive manner. He was totally unmoral and lovable; I would have liked to give him bread, sugar, carrots. But life is a stern thing and the sense of duty the only safe guide. So I steeled my heart and from my elevated position on the bridge I shouted to the men to fling themselves upon him in a body.

The elderly serang, emitting a strange inarticulate cry, gave the example. He was an excellent petty officer—very competent indeed and a moderate opium smoker. The rest of them in one great rush smothered that pony. They hung to his ears, to his mane, to his tail ; they lay in piles across his back, seventeen in all. The carpenter, seizing the hook of the cargo-chain, flung himself on the top of them. A very satisfactory petty officer, too, but he stuttered. Have you ever heard a light yellow, lean, sad, earnest Chinaman stutter ? It's very weird indeed. He made the eighteenth. I could not see the pony at all ; yet from the swaying and heaving of that heap of men I knew that there was something alive inside.

From the wharf Almayer hailed in quavering tones :

" Oh, I say ! "

Where he stood he could not see what was going on on deck unless perhaps the tops of the men's heads, but he could hear the scuffle, the mighty thuds, as if the ship were being knocked to pieces. I looked over : " What is it ? "

" Don't let them break his legs," he entreated me plaintively.

" Oh, nonsense ! He's all right. He can't move."

By that time the cargo-chain had been hooked to the broad canvas belt round the pony's body, the kalashes sprang off simultaneously in all directions, rolling over each other, and the worthy serang, making a dash behind the winch, turned the steam on.

" Steady ! " I yelled, in great apprehension of seeing the animal snatched up to the very head of the derrick.

On the wharf Almayer shuffled his straw slippers uneasily. The rattle of the winch stopped, and in a tense, impressive silence that pony began to swing across the deck.

How limp he was. Directly he felt himself in the air he relaxed every muscle in a most wonderful manner. His four hoofs hung down in a bunch, his head hung down, and his tail remained pendent in a nerveless and absolute immobility. He reminded me vividly of the pathetic little sheep that hangs on the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece. I had no idea that anything in the shape of a horse could be so limp as that, either living or dead. His wild mane hung down lumpily, a mere mass of inanimate horsehair ; his aggressive ears had collapsed, but as he went swaying slowly across the front of the bridge I noticed an astute gleam in his dreamy, half-closed eye. A trustworthy quartermaster, his glance anxious and his mouth on the broad grin, was easing over the derrick watchfully. I superintended, greatly interested.

"So! That will do."

The derrick-head stopped. The kalashes lined the rail. The rope of the halter hung perpendicular and motionless like a bell-pull in front of Almayer. Everything was very still. I suggested amicably that he should catch hold of it and mind what he was about. He extended a provokingly casual and superior hand.

"Look out then! Lower away!"

Almayer gathered in the rope intelligently enough, but when the pony's hoofs touched the wharf he gave way all at once to a most foolish optimism. Without pausing, without thinking, almost without looking he disengaged the hook suddenly from the sling and the cargo-chain, after hitting the pony's quarters, swung against the ship's side with a noisy, rattling slap. I suppose I must have blinked. I know I missed something, because the next thing I saw was Almayer lying full length on his back on the jetty. He was alone.

Astonishment deprived me of speech long enough to give Almayer time to pick himself up in a leisurely and painful manner. The kalashes lining the rail had all their mouths open. The mist flew in the light breeze and it had come over quite thick enough to hide the shore completely.

"How on earth did you manage to let him get away?" I asked scandalised.

Almayer looked into the smarting palm of his right hand, but did not answer my inquiry.

"Where do you think he will get to?" I cried. "Are there any fences anywhere in this fog? Can he bolt into the forest? What's to be done now?"

Almayer shrugged his shoulders.

"Some of my men are sure to be about. They will get hold of him sooner or later."

"Sooner or later! That's all very fine, but what about my canvas sling—he's gone with it. I want it now, at once, to land two Celebes cows."

Since Dongala we had on board a pair of the pretty little island cattle in addition to the pony. Tied up on the other side of the fore deck they had been whisking their tails into the other door of the galley. These cows were not for Almayer, however; they were invoiced to Abdullah bin Selim, his enemy. Almayer's disregard of my requirements was complete.

"If I were you I would try to find out where he's gone," I insisted. "Hadn't you better call your men together or

something ? He will throw himself down and cut his knees. He may even break a leg—you know."

But Almayer, plunged in abstracted thought, did not seem to want that pony any more. Amazed at this sudden indifference I turned all hands out on shore to hunt for him on my own account, or, at any rate, to hunt for the canvas sling which he had round his body. The whole crew of the steamer, with the exception of firemen and engineers, rushed up the jetty past the thoughtful Almayer and vanished from my sight. The white fog swallowed them up ; and again there was a deep silence that seemed to extend for miles up and down the stream. Still taciturn, Almayer started to climb on board, and I went down from the bridge to meet him on the after deck.

" Would you mind telling the captain that I want to see him very particularly ? " he asked me in a low tone, letting his eyes stray all over the place.

" Very well. I will go and see."

With the door of his cabin wide open Captain C——, just back from the bathroom, big and broad-chested, was brushing his thick, damp, iron-grey hair with two large brushes.

" Almayer's on board, sir. He told me he wanted to see you very particularly."

Saying these words I smiled. I don't know why I smiled except that it seemed absolutely impossible to mention Almayer's name without a smile of a sort. It had not to be necessarily a mirthful smile. Turning his head towards me Captain C—— smiled too, rather joylessly.

" The pony got away from him—eh ? "

" Yes sir. He did."

" Where is he ? "

" Goodness only knows."

" No. I mean Almayer. Let him come along."

The captain's stateroom opening straight on deck under the bridge, I had only to beckon from the doorway to Almayer, who had remained aft, with downcast eyes, on the very spot where I had left him. He strolled up moodily, shook hands and at once asked permission to shut the cabin door.

" I have a pretty story to tell you," were the last words I heard. The bitterness of tone was remarkable.

I went away from the door, of course. For the moment I had no crew on board ; only the Chinaman carpenter, with a canvas bag hung round his neck and a hammer in his hand, roamed about the empty decks knocking out the wedges of the hatches and dropping them into the bag conscientiously.

Having nothing to do I joined our two engineers at the door of the engine-room. It was a little past breakfast time.

"He's turned up early, hasn't he?" commented the second engineer, and smiled indifferently. He was an abstemious man with a good digestion and a placid, reasonable view of life even when hungry.

"Yes," I said. "Shut up with the old man. Some very particular business."

"He will spin him a damned endless yarn," observed the chief engineer.

He smiled rather sourly. He was dyspeptic and suffered from gnawing hunger in the morning. The second smiled broadly, a smile that made two vertical folds on his shaven cheeks. And I smiled too, but I was not exactly amused. In that man, whose name apparently could not be uttered anywhere in the Malay Archipelago without a smile, there was nothing amusing whatever. That morning he breakfasted with us silently, looking mostly into his cup. I informed him that my men came upon his pony capering on the very brink of the twelve-foot well in which he kept his store of guttah. The cover was off with no one near-by, and the whole of my crew nearly fell into that beastly hole. Jurumudi Itam, my best quartermaster, deft at fine needlework, he who mended the ship's flags and sewed buttons on our coats, got disabled by a kick on the shoulder.

Both remorse and gratitude seemed foreign to Almayer's character. He mumbled:

"Do you mean that pirate fellow?"

"What pirate fellow? The man has been in the ship eleven years."

"It's his looks," Almayer muttered absently for all apology.

The sun had eaten up the fog. From where we sat under the after awning we could see in the distance the pony tied up in front of Almayer's house, to a post of the verandah, it seemed. We were silent for a long time. All at once Almayer, alluding evidently to the subject of his conversation in the captain's cabin, exclaimed anxiously across the table:

"I really don't know what I can do now!"

Captain C—— only raised his eyebrows at him, and got up from his chair. We dispersed to our duties, but Almayer, half-dressed as he was in his cretonne pyjamas and the thin cotton singlet, remained on board, lingering near the gangway as though he could not make up his mind whether to go home or stay with us for good. Our Chinamen boys gave him side glances

as they went to and fro ; and Ah Sing, our young chief steward, the handsomest and most sympathetic of Chinamen, catching my eye, nodded knowingly at his burly back. In the course of the morning I approached him for a moment.

" Well, Mr. Almayer," I addressed him easily, " you haven't started on your letters yet."

We had brought him his mail and he had held the bundle in his hand ever since we got up from breakfast. He glanced at it when I spoke and, for a moment, it looked as if he were on the point of opening his fingers and letting the whole lot fall overboard. I believe he was tempted to do so. I can never forget that man afraid of his letters.

" Have you been long out from Europe ? " he asked me.

" Not very. Not quite eight months," I told him. " I left a ship in Samarang with a hurt back and have been in the hospital in Singapore some weeks."

He sighed.

" Trade is very bad here."

" Indeed ! "

" Hopeless ! . . . See these geese ? "

With the hand holding the letters he pointed out to me what seemed a patch of snow creeping and swaying across the distant part of his compound. It disappeared behind some bushes.

" The only geese on the East Coast," Almayer informed me in a perfunctory mutter without a spark of faith, hope or pride. Thereupon, with the same absence of any sort of sustaining spirit he declared his intention to look out a fat bird and send him on board for us no later than next day.

I had heard of these largesses before. He conferred a goose as if it were a sort of Court decoration given only to the tried friends of the house. I had expected more pomp in the ceremony. The gift had surely its special quality, multiple and rare. From the only flock on the East Coast ! He did not make half enough of it. That man did not understand his opportunities. However, I thanked him at some length.

" You see," he interrupted abruptly in a very peculiar tone, " the worst of this country is that one is not able to realise . . . it's impossible to realise. . . ." His voice sank into a languid mutter. " And when one has very large interests . . . very important interests . . ." he finished fainly . . . " up the river."

We looked at each other. He astonished me by giving a start and making a very queer grimace.

" Well, I must be off," he burst out hurried. " So long ! "

At the moment of stepping over the gangway he checked himself though, to give me a mumbled invitation to dine at his house that evening, an invitation which I accepted. I don't think it could have been possible for me to refuse.

I like the worthy folk that will talk to you of the exercise of free-will "at any rate for practical purposes." Free, is it? For practical purposes! Bosh! How could I have refused to dine with that man? I did not refuse simply because I could not refuse. Curiosity, a healthy desire for a change of cooking, common civility, the talk and the smiles of the previous twenty days, every condition of my existence at that moment and place made irresistibly for acceptance; and crowning all that there was the ignorance, the ignorance, I say, the fatal want of fore-knowledge to counterbalance these imperative conditions of the problem. A refusal would have appeared perverse and insane. Nobody unless a surly lunatic would have refused. But if I had not got to know Almayer pretty well it is almost certain there would never have been a line of mine in print.

I accepted then—and I am paying yet the price of my sanity. The possessor of the only flock of geese on the East Coast is responsible for the existence of some fourteen volumes, so far. The number of geese he had called into being under adverse climatic conditions was considerably more than fourteen. The tale of volumes will never overtake the counting of heads, I am safe to say; but my ambitions point not exactly that way, and whatever the pangs the toil of writing has cost me I have always thought kindly of Almayer.

I wonder, had he known anything of it, what his attitude would have been? This is something not to be discovered in this world. But if we ever meet in the Elysian Fields—where I cannot depict him to myself otherwise than attended in the distance by his flock of geese (birds sacred to Jupiter)—and he addresses me in the stillness of that passionless region, neither night nor day, neither sound nor silence, and heaving endlessly with billowy mists from the impalpable multitudes of the swarming dead, I think I know what answer to make.

I would say, after listening courteously to the unvibrating tone of his measured remonstrances, which should not disturb, of course, the solemn eternity of stillness in the least—I would say something like this:

"It is true, Almayer, that, in the world below, I have converted your name to my own uses. But that is a very small larceny. What's in a name, O Shade? If so much of your old mortal weakness clings to you yet as to make you feel aggrieved

(it was the note of your earthly voice, Almayer) then I entreat you, seek out without delay our sublime fellow Shade—him who, in his transient existence as a poet, commented upon the smell of the rose. He will comfort you. You came to me stripped of all prestige by men's queer smiles and the disrespectful chatter of every vagrant trader in the Islands. Your name was the common property of the winds : it, as it were, floated naked over the waters about the Equator. I wrapped round its unhonoured form the royal mantle of the tropics and have essayed to put into the hollow sound the very anguish of paternity—feats which you did not demand from me—but remember that all the toil and all the pain were mine. In your earthly life you haunted me Almayer. Consider that this was taking a great liberty. Since you were always complaining of being lost to the world, you should remember that if I had not believed enough in your existence to let you haunt my rooms in Bessborough Gardens, you would have been much more lost. You affirm that had I been capable of looking at you with a more perfect detachment and a greater simplicity, I might have perceived better the inward marvellousness which, you insist, attended your career upon that tiny pinpoint of light, hardly visible far, far below us, where both our graves lie. No doubt ! We can only believe and understand in the terms of our imperfect credulity and under the limitations of our timid intelligence, which is so often untrue to our inspiration. But reflect, O complaining Shade ! that this was not so much my fault as your crowning misfortune. I believed in you in the only way it was possible for me to believe. It was not worthy of your merits. So be it. But you were always an unlucky man, Almayer. Nothing was ever quite worthy of you. What made you so real to me was that you held this lofty theory with some force of conviction and with an admirable consistency."

It is with some such words translated into the proper shadowy expressions that I am prepared to placate Almayer in the Elysian Abode of Shades, since it has come to pass that having parted many years ago, we are never to meet again in this world.

(To be continued)

The Coach

By Violet Hunt

It was a lonely part of the country, far away in the north, where the summer nights are pale and scant of shade. There was no moon and yet it was not dark. For hours the flat, deprecating earth had lain prone under a storm of wind and rain. Its patient surface was drenched, blanched, smitten into blindness. The tumbled waters of the Firth splashed on the edges of the plain, their mild commotion dwarfed by the noise of the wind-driven showers, whose gloomy drops tapped the waters into sullen acquiescence. Half a mile inland the great main Roman road was laid. Clear and straight it ran, with never a house or homestead to break it, viscous with clay here, shining with quartz there, uncompromising, exact, a pallid ribbon stretched from South to North. Its sides were bare, scantily garnished with grass—this was nearly a hedgeless country—but in places the undeviating line of it passed through a little nut coppice or clump of gnarled, ill-conditioned trees. They seemed to lean forward vindictively on either side, snapping their horny fingers at each other, waving their cantankerous branches as the gusts took them, broke them, and whirled the fragments of their ruin far away and out of ken, like a flapping unruly kite which a child has allowed to pass beyond his control. The broad white surface of the road beneath was not suffered to be blotted for a single moment. Nothing could rest for the play of the intriguing air currents, surging backwards and forwards, blind, stupid, unpacified. They had got completely out of hand and defied the archers of the middle sky. Staggering hither and thither like ineffectual giants, they buffeted all impartially ; they instigated the hapless boughs at their mercy to savage lashings of each other, to useless accesses of self-destruction. Bending slavishly under the heady gusts, each shabby blade of grass by the roadside rose again and was on the *qui-vive* after the rustling tyrant had passed.

It was then, in the succeeding moments of comparative peace, when the directors of the passionate aerial revolt had

managed to call their panting rabble off for the time, that great perpendicular sheets of rain, like stage films, descended, and began moving continuously sideways, like a wall of plate-glass, across the level track, as if slung evenly from heavenly tent-poles. A sheet of whole water, blotting out the stubbly borders of herbage that grew sparsely round the heaps of stones with which the margin was set at intervals, placed there ready for breaking ! When the slab of rain had moved on again, the broad road, shining out sturdily with its embedded quartz and milky, kneaded clay, lay clear once more. Calm, ordered and tranquil in the midst of tumult and discord it pursued its appointed course, from its evenly bevelled sides, edging off the noisy moor-land streams, that had come jostling each other in their haste to reach it, only to be relegated, noisily plaining, to the swollen unrecognisable gutter.

At a certain point on the line of way, a tall, spare, respectable-looking man in a well-fitting grey frock coat stood waiting. The rain ran down the back of his coat collar, and dripped off the rim of his tall hat. His attitude was that of some weary foredone clerk waiting at the corner of the city street for the omnibus that was to carry him home to slippered comfort and sober pipe of peace. He wore no muffler, but then it was summer — St. John's Eve. He leaned on an iron-headed ebony stick of which he seemed fond, and peered, not very eagerly, along the road, which now, during a lull, lay in dazzling rain-washed clarity, under the struggling moon. He had no luggage, no umbrella, yet his coat looked neat, and his hat shiny.

Far in the distance, southwards, a black clumsy object appeared, labouring along. A coach, of heavy and antique pattern. As soon as he had sighted it, the passenger's interest diminished. With a slightly bored air of fulfilment, he took his eyes off, and looked down at the clayey mud at his feet dis-approvingly, although, indeed, the sticky substance did not appear to have marred the exquisite polish of his shoes. His palm settled composedly on the ivory knob of his trusty stick, as though it were the hand of an old friend.

With all the signs of difficult going, but no noises of straining or grinding, the coach at last drew up in front of the expectant passenger. He looked up quietly, and recognised it as the vehicle wherein it was appointed that he should travel, in this unsuitable weather, a stage or two, maybe. All was correct, the coachman, grave, businesslike, headless as of usage, the horses long-tailed, black, conventional . . .

The door opened noiselessly, and the footboard was let down. He shook his head as he delicately stepped into it, and observed, for the benefit, doubtless, of the person or persons inside :

" I see old Diggory on the box in his official trim ! Rather unnecessary, all this ceremony, I venture to think ! A few yokels and old women to impress, if indeed any one not positively obliged is abroad on a night like this ! For form's sake, I suppose."

He took his seat next the window. There were four occupants of the coach beside himself. They all nodded stiffly, but not unkindly. He returned their salutations with old-fashioned courtesy, though unacquainted seemingly with any of them.

Sitting next to him was a woman evidently of fashion. Her dark, rich, valuable furs were negligently cast on one side, to show a plastron covered with jewels. She wore at least two enamelled and encrusted watches pinned to her bosom as a mark for thieves to covet. So at least thought the man in the frock coat. Her yellow wig was much awry. Her eyes were weak, strained and fearful, and she aided their vision with a diamond beset *pince-nez*. Now and again, she glanced over her left shoulder as if in some alarm and at such times she always grasped her gold net reticule feverishly. She was obviously a rich woman in the world, a first-class, *train-de-luxe* passenger.

The woman opposite her belonged as unmistakably to the people. She was hard-featured, worn with a life of sordid toil and calculation, but withal stout and motherly, a figure to inspire the fullest confidence. She wore a black bonnet with strings and black silk gloves heavily darned. Round her sunken collar, a golden gleam of watch-chain was now and then discernible.

At the other end of the coach, squeezed up into the corner where the vacillating light of the lamp hanging from the roof least penetrated, a neat, sharp-featured man nestled and hid. His forehead retreated, and his bowler hat was set unnecessarily far back, lending him an air of folly and congenital weakness which his long, cold, clever nose could not dissipate. He was white as enamel.

But the man whom the man in the frock-coat most affected among his casual fellow travellers was the one sitting directly opposite him, a rough, hearty creature, who alone of all the taciturn coachful seemed disposed to enter into a casual conversation, which might go some way to enliven the dreariness

entailed by this somewhat old-fashioned mode of travelling. Speech might help to drown the dashing of the rain against the windows and the ugly roar of the waters of the Firth lying close on the right hand of the section of road they were even now traversing. This—by comparison—cheerful fellow was dressed like a working man, in a shabby suit of corduroys, he wore no collar, but a twisted red cotton handkerchief wound tightly round his thick, squat neck. His little mean eyes, swinish, but twinkling good-humouredly, stared rather enviously at the neat gentleman's stiff collar and the delicate grey tones of his suiting. Crossing and uncrossing his creasy legs, in the unusual effort of an attempt at conviviality, the man in corduroys addressed the man in the frock coat at last, awkwardly enough, but still civilly.

"Well, mate! They've chosen a rare rough night to shift us on! Orders from headquarters, I suppose? I've been here nigh on a year and never set eyes on my boss!"

"We used to call him God the Father," said the elder man slowly. . . . "But whoever it is that orders our ways here, there is no unearthly sense in questioning his arrangements, one can only fall in with them. As you admit, you are fairly new, and perhaps you do not as yet conceive fully of the silent impelling force that sways us here. It is the same in the world we have left, only that there we were only concerned with the titles and standing of our 'boss,' as you call him, and obeyed His laws not a whit. Still, personally, I *must* say I consider this particular system of soul transference very unsettling and productive of restlessness among us. It's a mere survival of a tiresome superstition. It has a single merit; one sees something of the under-world, travelling about as we do, and meeting chance, perhaps kindred, spirits on the road. One realises, too, that Hades is not quite as grey, shall I say, as it is painted? But perhaps"—he added, with a slight touch of class hauteur, "you do not quite follow me?"

"Oh yes, master, I do," eagerly replied the fellow traveller to whom he chose to address his monologue. "Since I've been dead, I have learned the meaning of many things. I turn up my nose at nothing these days. I always neglected my schooling, but now I tell you I try to make up for lost time. From a rough sort of fellow that I was, with not an idea in my head beyond my beer and my prog, I have come to take my part in the whole of knowledge. It was all mine before, so to speak, but I didn't trouble to put my hand out for it. Didn't care, didn't listen to Miss that taught me, or to parson, either. He had some good ideas, too, as I've come to know, though vice isn't vice exactly

with us here, now, in a manner of speaking. If God Almighty made us, why did He make us, even in parts, bad, that's what I want to know, and I'll know that when I've been dead a bit longer? Why did He give me rotten teeth so that I couldn't chew properly and didn't care for my food and liked drink better? It's digestion makes drinking, I say."

The smart woman interrupted him, with a kind of languid eagerness, exclaiming:

"I must say I agree with you. Since the pestle fell on my shoulder in that lonely villa at Monte, I have realised what the dreadful gambling fever may lead to. It had made those two inhuman. They were wild beasts. I entered their cage. I should never have accepted their treacherous invitation to luncheon, never tempted them with my outrageous display of jewels! And ah me! I was tarred with the same stick, I gambled, too"—she rummaged in her reticule and fished out a ticket for the rooms at Monte Carlo. "I always call that the ticket for my execution. Though, indeed, my executioners were a little brutal. They will attain unto this place easier than I did. The hand of the law is gentle, compared with the methods of Sir V——"

The man in the grey frock coat raised his finger warningly. "No names, I beg! One of our conventions! . . ."

"Have a drop?" said the calm motherly woman to the excited fine lady. "Your wound is recent, isn't it? Yours was a very severe case! A bloody murder, I call it, if ever there was one, and clumsy at that! And you only passive, which is always so much harder, they say! I can't tell, I was what you may call an active party. *They* don't seem to mind mixing, they that look after us here, they lump us all together, travelling, at any rate! Though when I think of what I was actually turned off for—well, the way I look at it, what I did was a positive benefit to society, and some sections of society knew it, too, and would have liked to preserve me. I have been told that there are people, clever people in the world, who are not ashamed to say so, and who gnashed their teeth with vexation when the verdict went against me. Now Mr. H. B.——"

"No names, again," the man in the frock coat again interposed suavely. "But what, madam, if I may ask, was your little difficulty?"

"It is called, I believe, baby-farming," she replied offhandedly, receiving her flask back from the smart woman and stowing it away in a capacious pocket. As she spoke a shudder, like a transitory ripple on a rain-swept stream, passed over her hearers,

with the exception of the thin man in the far corner, who preserved his serenity, but raising his sunken chin, observed the last speaker with some slight show of interest.

The man in the grey frock-coat apologised.

"Excuse us, madam. A remnant of old-world squeamishness, uncontrollable by us for the moment. Though, perhaps, if you would, you might somewhat dissipate our preconceived notions of your profession, by explaining your point of view a little."

"Delighted, I'm sure," she answered. "Funny, though, how seriously you all take it, even here! The feeling against my profession is so very strong. I was hooted as I left the court, I recollect. It annoyed me then considerably. I thought that those that hooted had more need to be grateful to me if all was known and paid for. I saved their pockets for them and their lovely credit. They knew they owed that to me. For the rest they did not mind. They went on, carelessly raising up seed for me to mow down as soon as its head came above ground, and welcome! Sly dogs, no thanks from them! But those shivering shrinking women that came to me, some of them hardly out of their teens—some of them so delicate they had no right to have a baby at all! Ah, if only I hadn't let myself take their money it would have been a work of pure philanthropy. But I had to live, then. Now that that tax has been taken off, one has time to think it out all round. But Lord!—Society, to cry shame on me for doing its dirty work for it! They might as well hang any other useful public servant, like dustmen, rat-catchers, and such like ridders of pests. Good old Herod, that I used to hear about at school, knew what he was doing when he cleared off all those useless innocents! He was the first baby-farmer, I take it."

"You take large ground, madam," said the man in the frock-coat, a trifle huffily.

"And I have the right," said she, her large determined chin emerging boldly from its rolls of fat, in her eagerness. "You men ought to know it, and you do. I was only the 'scapegoat, and took on me the little sins of the race. It's an easy job enough, what I did, but there's few have the stomach for it even then. . . . You couldn't call it dirty work neither. You just stand by and leave 'em alone—to girn and bloat and die——"

"No blood, eh?" the man in the corner said suddenly. "I like blood!"

"What a fine night it has turned!" said the man in the grey

frock-coat, raising the sash and putting his head out of the window. "Something rather uncanny, eh, about that man?" he remarked under his breath, half to himself, half to the man in brown corduroys.

"Take your head in," said the latter almost affectionately, "or you'll be catching cold, and you've got a nasty scar on your neck that I could see as you leaned forward, and that you oughtn't to go getting the cold into."

"Oh, that!" said the other complacently, sitting down again, but averting his gaze carefully from the man in the corner, for whom he seemed to feel a repulsion as marked as was his preference for his cheerful *vis-à-vis*. "That! That's actually the scar of the blow that killed me. A fearful gash! He was a powerful man that dealt it me. He got me, of course, from behind, I never even saw him. I was drafted off here at once, his hand had been so sure." He felt nervously in his pockets. "I have a foulard somewhere, but I am apt to mislay it."

"You should do like me, have a good strong handkerchief and knot it round your neck firm. I've got a mark of sorts on my neck, too, but it isn't an open wound—never was. It is sheer vanity with me, but I don't care to have it seen. It goes well all round—mine—done by a rope!" He paused and nodding slyly—"For killing a toff. Nice old gentleman he seemed, too, but I hadn't much time to look at him. Had to get to work——"

He was interrupted by the baby-farmer.

"Lord!" she said. "Do I see another conveyance coming on this lonely road? I'm one for seeing plenty of people. I always liked a crowd and this sort of thing was beginning to get fairly on my nerves."

They all jerked themselves round and peered through the glass pane behind each one of them. The taciturn man reserved his attention. Sure enough, a dark object, plainly outlined in the moonlight which now lit up the heavens, where clouds had obscured the earlier part of their journey, was distinctly visible. It blotted the ribbon of white that lay in front of them. . . . It was a high-hung dog-cart, of the most modern pattern, drawn by a smart little pony, and driven by one of two young girls—the one that wore noticeably white dog-skin gloves that looked immense in the pallid moonshine.

"What an excitement? I've never met any one on the road before!" exclaimed the stout woman.

"I hope—for I'm not a bloodthirsty man—that we're not a-going to give them a shock and send that pony all over the

road?" the man in corduroys muttered anxiously. "We mostly do, you know, when we meet them plump like this! 'Orses can't abide the sight of Us, mostly, no more than they could motors at first. And we're worse than motors—they seem to smell us out at once for what we are!"

"If you think that pony likely to swerve," said the man in grey anxiously, "would it be of any use asking old Diggory to drive more slowly?"

"Couldn't go no slower than we are!" the man in corduroys replied. "Besides, it's not the pace that kills! I'll bet you that pony's all of a sweat already?"

The trap approached. The faces of the two young women were discernible. They were white—with fear—or was it merely an effect of the moonlight? They were disturbed evidently, and the one who was driving, fully realised the necessity of controlling the horse, whose nostrils were quivering. . . .

"It won't pass us!" said the man in the corner, speaking suddenly. "There will be blood!"

"Do stop gloating like that!" said the stout woman. "It turns my stomach to hear you. Wherever have you come from, I wonder? . . . I say, can't we hail them?" she inquired of the man in grey. "All give one big shout?"

"They wouldn't hear us," he replied, shaking his head sadly. "You must remember we're ghosts. We're not really there!"

"And that's what the beasteses know!" cried the man in corduroys. "That 'oss won't be able to stand it! She'll not be able to hold it in!"

"They're on us!" screamed the smart woman. "Oh, my God, do we have to sit still and see it?"

"Yes, missis, and what's more, run away after, like any motor-car that's killed his man. Old Diggory's got his orders . . ."

The frantic snorting of the horse was now audible, the lather of foam dropping from its jaws distinctly visible, and the agonised tension of one girl's hands, and the scared white faces of both, visible by the light of the carriage lamp. . . .

Then the lamp flew downwards and was extinguished, there was a crash, and the road to the north lay clear again. The Coach of Death rolled on remorselessly, past a black heap that filled the ditch by the side, lying quite still, after one heave. . . .

The smart woman fainted, or appeared to do so.

"It's iniquitous!" exclaimed the man in grey. "To leave them behind like that when it's our conveyance has done the mischief!" He groaned.

"We aren't to blame, sir," said the man in corduroys, consoling him. "As you said before—*We ain't really here!*"

"Small consolation!" The old man shook his head, and devoted himself to the smart woman, who revived under his ministrations.

"I shouldn't be surprised if those two girls joined us at the next stage," she observed cheerily, "and then we'll make them tell us all they felt, when they saw the coachful of ghosts coming down upon them. They were both in the ditch, I'm sure, with the cart on top of them. And now, I'm just thinking—suppose, to while away the time, we all told each other the story of how we came to be here? A lively tale might cheer us all up, after the accident."

"Agreed, madam, heartily," said the man in grey. "My own story is by no means a gruesome one, and I regarded the accident that ended me as particularly toward. But—ladies first! Will not you begin?"

"My story, perhaps," she replied modestly, "might not be very new to you. It was in the papers so very recently."

"That will not affect me," he answered. "For if, as I conjecture, it was a murder case, I never read them!"

"I read yours, missis, I expect," said the man in corduroys. "I generally get the missis to read the spicy things out to me."

"It filled the papers for nearly a week," she said eagerly. "And yet the people that did it are not hanged yet. If, indeed, poor souls, they ever are hanged? The French, you know, are lenient, and quite mild and kind in *cold* blood. I am quite anxious to see how it goes. If the pair really are sent here, I suppose I shall be running up against them some night or other, on one of these transference parties. It will be very interesting. But——" she leaned across to the baby-farmer, "could we not persuade you to give us some of your —nursery experiences, madam?"

"There's not much story about the drowning of a litter of squalling puppies or whining kittens," said that lady shortly, "we want something livelier—more personal, if I may say so. From a remark that gentleman in the corner let drop a while ago, I fancy his reminiscences would be quite worth hearing, as good as a shilling shocker."

"My story," the individual thus pointedly addressed replied in a low voice, "is impossible, frankly impossible."

"Indecent, do you mean?" The smart woman's eyes shone. "Oh, let us have it. You can veil it, can't you?"

"Have you ever heard of mental degenerates?" he asked

her compassionately. "I was one. I was called mad—a simple way of expressing it. I was a chemist—a dissector—a bit of a butcher. They did right to exterminate me."

His head dropped. He seemed disinclined to say more. Still the smart woman persisted.

"But the details——?"

"Are purely medical, madam! Not without a psychologico-morbid interest! The ——" (he named a daily paper much in vogue) "made a good deal of the implied sense of contrast—the artistic warp, as I might say, of the executant." His head sank again on his chest.

"I do believe," said the baby-farmer, nudging the smart woman, "he's the man who killed his sweetheart, and then tied her poor inside all into true-lovers' knots with sky-blue ribbon. Very common colours—blue and red!"

"Disgusting!" The delicate-minded lady turned away and joined in the petition of the other ghosts to the breezy man in corduroys to relate his experiences.

"Oh, I'll tell you how I came to join you and welcome!" he said, rolling his huge neck about in its setting of red cotton. "Well, to begin with, I was drunk. Equally, of course, I was hard up. My missus—she's married again, by the way, blast her!—was always nagging me to do something for her and the children. I did. Nation's taking care of them now, along of what I did. Work, she meant, but that was only by the way. I did take on a job, though, on a rich man's estate, building some kind of Folly, lots of glass and that, working away day and night by naphtha flares, you know. He was one of those men, you know the sort, that has more money than a man can properly spend, and feels quite sick about it, and says so, in interviews and so on in the papers a working man reads. That's the mischief. He was always giving away chunks of money to charities, libraries, and that sort of useless lumber, but none of it ever seemed to come the way of those that were in real need of it. They said the money had got on his nerves, and would not let him sleep o' nights, and that he was afraid by day and went about with a loaded stick and I don't know what all. And he was looked after by detectives, at one time, so the papers said—putting things in people's heads, as it's their way. So one blessed evening I was very low—funds and all—and my missus and the kids hollering and complaining as they always do when luck's bad. Lord bless them, they never thought as they were 'citing their man to murder. Women never do think. And going out with their snivelling in my ears I passed the station where he landed

every evening after his day in town, and I happened to see him come out of the train and send away his motor that was awaiting for him all regular, and start out to walk 'ome alone by a short cut across a little plantation there was, very thick and dark, just the place for a murder. Well—I told you I was half drunk—I raced home and got something to do it with—a meat chopper, to be particular——"

The old man opposite put his hand up nervously to the back of his neck.

"Ay, mister, it takes you just there, does it? You look a regular bundle of nerves, you do. Well, as I was saying, I went round by a short cut that I happened to know of, and got in front of him and hid in the hedge. Ten mortal minutes I waited for my man to come by. Lord, how my hand did tremble! I'd have knocked off for twopence. I was as nervous as a cat, but all the same, it didn't prevent me from striking out for wife and children with a will when my chance came. I caught him behind with my chopper and he fell like a log. Never lifted a hand to defend himself—hadn't got any grit. Ladies, I don't suppose I hurt him much, for he never even cried out when I struck, or groaned when it was done. Then I looked him over, turned out his pockets and collared his watch and season ticket and seals and money. Money—ha!—I had been fairly done over that! Would you believe it of a rich fellow like that, he hadn't got more than the change of a sovereign on him?"

"Shame!" ejaculated the taciturn man in the corner.

"I admit it was hard on you," the man in the grey frock-coat observed kindly. "Very hard, for as I read, the retribution came all too quickly. You foolishly left your chopper about to identify you, and were apprehended at once, by our excellent rural police. Yet the law is so dilatory that you lay in gaol a whole year before you were free to join your victim here?"

"Right you are, mate. Yes, I swung for it, sure enough. Short and sweet it was, when once I stood on the drop, but it still makes my poor old throat ache to think of it." He wriggled and twisted his neck in its cincture. . . . "Now, governor, I'm done, and if you've no objection we'd all like to hear how you came by that ugly gash of yours? It wasn't no rope did that. Common or garden murder, I'll be bound?"

"Certainly, my man, it was a murder—a murder most *à propos*. I suppose you will hardly believe that, but the circumstances were peculiar. I have often longed to get the ear of the jury who tried the man for relieving me of my light purse and

my intolerably heavy life, and tell them—the whole labouring twelve of them, trying their best to bring in an honest verdict and avenge my wrongs—my own proper feelings, surely no negligible factor in the case! They could not guess—these ignorant living men, whose eyes had not yet been opened by death to a due sense of the proportions of things—that I bore the poor creature no malice, but was actually grateful for his skilful surgery, that had severed the cord of the life that bored me so neatly and completely."

"It isn't every one would take it like that!" remarked the smart woman. "Yet that is, more or less, how I feel about these things myself. Only in my case it is impossible to speak of skilful surgery! I was disgracefully cut up. I couldn't possibly have worn a low dress again!"

"Have you ever heard," said the man in the grey frock-coat thoughtfully, "of the Gold of Rhampsinitos and the inviolable cellar he built to store it in? There it stayed unchanged at least. According to the modern system, in the place where my gold was hoarded fat assets and sordid securities bred and bred all day long. The laws that govern money are hard. You must give it, devise it, you must not allow it to be taken. But for my part I would have welcomed the two sons of the master-builder who broke into the King's Treasure-house. In the strong-room of my brain it was lodged. With one careless calculation, one stroke of a pen, I could make money breed money there to madden me. I was lonely, too. I had no wife to divide my responsibilities. She might have enjoyed them. But I dared approach no woman in the way of love—I would not be loved for my cheque-signing powers. I was not loved at all. I was hated. Unrighteous things were done in my name, by the greedy husbanders of my load of money. I was told that I went in danger of my life, and I condescended to take care of that, for a time—only for a time! One dark winter evening—I forget what had happened during the day, what fresh instance of turpitude or greed had come before me—I was so revolted that I kicked away all the puling safeguards by which my agents guarded their best asset of all, and gave the rein to my instinct. I violently disregarded precautions of every sort—with the exception of my faithful stick, and the carrying of that had come to be a mere matter of habit with me—and I walked home from the station, alone and unattended, up to my big house and good dinner which I hoped—nay, I almost knew—that I should not be alive to eat. And indeed as luck would have it, on that night of all nights the trap was set for me. The appointed death-dealer was waiting—

he took me on at once. I got my desire—kind, speedy, merciful, violent death. I never even saw the face of my deliverer."

"By George!" softly swore the man in corduroys. "This beats all. Are you sure you aren't kidding us?"

"No, indeed, that is exactly how I felt about it, and if I had known of knowledge, as I knew of instinct, what was going to happen, I would have managed to realise some of my wealth before setting out to walk through that wood, and made it more worth the honest fellow's while. But as you are aware, a millionaire does not carry portable gold about with him, and my cheque-book, which was on me, would, of course, be of no use to him. Alas, all the poor devil got for his pains was exactly nineteen shillings and elevenpence. I had changed a sovereign at the book-stall to buy a paper, and out of habit, had waited for the change."

The man in corduroys was by this time in a considerable state of excitement. He had pulled the red handkerchief fiercely from his neck and now made as if to tear it across his knee. . . .

"Why, governor!" he exclaimed passionately, "do you mean to say it was through you that I got this here"—he put both hands behind his head and interlocked them—"in return for giving you that there nasty cut at the back of your neck? Yes, sure! Well how things do come about!"

"Gently, gently! my man," the elder soothed him. "Don't be so melodramatic about a very ordinary coincidence. See, the ladies are quite upset! It doesn't do to allow oneself to get excited here—it's not in the rules. If I had made the little discovery you have done, I don't think—no, I really don't think I would have made it public. This undue exhibition of emotion of yours strikes me as belonging to the vulgar world we have all left. But since you have allowed it to come out, and every one is now aware of the peculiar relation in which we stand to each other, you must let me tender you my best thanks, as to a most skilful and firm operator, and believe me to be truly grateful to you for your services in the past."

"Quite the old school!" said the smart woman.

"I must say, sir, I consider you a real gentleman," said the baby-farmer.

"I am a gentleman."

"And a fairly accommodating one!" said the rough man, wiping his brow where, however, no sweat was. "It isn't every man as would give thanks for being scragged!"

"Every man isn't a millionaire," said his victim calmly.

The smart woman, leaning forward, tapped the old gentleman amiably with her jewelled *pince-nez*.

"But we belong to the same world, I perceive," she said, "and so I am quite able to understand your refined feeling. It is as I said in my own case. Indeed, if those two good people, who shall be nameless, had only dealt with me a little more gently, I don't know that I would not forgive them absolutely. I shall at any rate be perfectly civil when I do meet them—only perhaps a *leetle* distant. But that Monte Carlo existence I was leading when they interrupted it, was really becoming intolerable. No one who hasn't done it thoroughly and from the rich inside can realise what it is. Glare, noise, glitter, fever—that heartless, blue, laughing sea——"

The baby-farmer, left behind in this elegant discussion, obviously took no pleasure in it, but, staring straight before her, muttered sulkily :

"Côte d'Azur and Pentonville! There's some little difference, isn't there, between that life and mine? Yet I enjoyed my life, I did, and as for gratitude, I can't say as I see all those blessed infants a-coming up to me, and slobbering me for what I did for 'em! It isn't in human nature. Their mothers' thanks was all I got and they thanked me beforehand, some of them, for what I was going to do. Lord, what's a rickety baby more or less? I say, we're slowing up! Going to stop perhaps, and a good thing, too!"

"Yes," said the man in the grey frock-coat, speaking very clearly without observing whether he had listeners or not, "I cordially thank the man who rid me with one clean scientific blow of my wretched life and all its tedious accessories. A skilled workman is worthy of his hire! . . ."

"Mercy!" muttered the baby-farmer. "Is he never going to stop? If it was for nothing else, he ought to have got scragged for being a bore!"

But the man in the grey frock-coat continued, being fully wound up, though in the excitement of arrival at the depôt no one was attending. "Suicide I had thought of, but abhorred, though on my soul I had nearly come to that, and then it was merely a question of courage. I had not the courage—you spoke truly, sir. Mine was a thin, pusillanimous nature, as you said. You came by, a kind Samaritan, and sacrificed your own good life freely to rid me of my wretched one. I think I told you that when you were being tried, I followed urgently all the details of the trial, and made interest with the authorities here to allow me to appear to the judge in his sleep, say, and instil into his mind some inkling of the true state of my feelings towards you. I do not know, however, if you would have thanked me,

for life may have been no sweeter to you than it was to me—you spoke of an uncongenial helpmate, I think? Still, one never knows. I might have been the means of procuring you some good years yet, in the full exercise of your undeniable vigour and remarkable decision of character. But it was apparently not to be. You followed me here, after a tedious interval of waiting, and now we have met, face to face. The introduction on that dark night was worth nothing. I like your face. We shall probably never meet again—their ways are dark and devious here—I am the more glad of this gracious opportunity of opening my mind to you, on a delicate subject, perhaps, but one that has always been very near my heart. By the way"—he lifted his stick, with its shining ivory crown, into view—"did you notice this? You read the papers, you said, and they told you it was heavily weighted and that I carried it always as a precaution? Well, on that eventful night for both of us, perhaps you were too hurried to notice, but I never used it. Accept it, now, will you not, as a memento? . . . I think from sundry truly unearthly bumpings that we seem to have come at last to our journey's end. . . . I am right, the coachman has got down from his perch and taken his head under his arm. . . . We part. Mesdames, I salute you. Again, sir"—he addressed himself more particularly to the shamefaced man in corduroys—"farewell. Very pleased to have met you!"

One by one, the passengers faded away. For a moment, the polite old man paused; a pale, proud woman's face, tilted up by the coach step, had touched him. She was quite alone. She wore white dog-skin gloves, but no hat. Ah, but on looking closer, he saw that it hung disregarded over her shoulder by an elastic, and was much battered. He decided to speak to her.

"You are the lady we killed, I think?" he asked her gently.

She acknowledged, in a formal, off-hand manner, that it was so.

"We could none of us do anything," said he, "or I hope you will believe——"

"Certainly, sir, it was no fault of yours, I am sure. The accident was quite inevitable," she told him, smiling faintly. There *was* blood on the hair, he was able to assure himself. "Rory, my pony, never can pass things, at the best of times, and the look of your conveyance was certainly rather unusual. But at that time of night, we rarely meet anything on the Great North Road. We chose that time on purpose—my sister and I—we had been away a week, and we were going home. When we saw you coming, she said, half in jest—she is younger than me—

suppose that lumbering thing in front were the Coach of Death the foolish country people here talk about. They say it travels in this way once a year, with its cargo of poor souls who have died by violence, on St. John's Eve. And this is St. John's Eve! I asked her not to be superstitious, but I confess I thought the vehicle looked odd, myself, and wondered how Rory would stand it? When it came nearer, I saw distinctly that the coachman was headless, and I told my sister so. She bade me not disturb her, for dead coach or live coach, she meant to do her best to get Rory past it! She failed——"

The man in grey looked round. He was alone with her. The headless coachman was preparing to ascend to the box-seat again. . . . "Where *is* your sister?" he asked.

"She lies at the bottom of the ditch. Rory has galloped home. She fell on her head, but she is alive still. When they find her in the morning she will be dead, I know that. She will join me. Now I know all. I am at peace—you must have no care for me. . . ."

"Let me at least put you into the coach!" he begged. "Will you not prefer the corner? I see you are going to have all the accommodation to yourself for this stage. I am sorry I cannot offer to accompany you, but I have my marching orders! . . ."

He raised his hat and disappeared, as the coach moved on and was lost in the mist. . . . The summer dawn was breaking.

The Family Stories of a Public Servant

By M.

My father, before representing his Sovereign abroad, was in a Downing Street establishment and, being imbued with strong literary tastes, became the friend or acquaintance of many of the authors and poets of the day, his greatest friends among them being Thackeray, Trollope, and Tennyson. The latter I remember very slightly, but I am the proud possessor of a story of my own, dictated to my father when I was six years old, and illustrated by Thackeray, who came in while my parent was transcribing the working of my infant brain.

A year later, Thackeray stood godfather to my youngest brother, the other godfather being an American general for whom I was standing proxy. My instructions were to do as Mr. Thackeray did. At a certain portion of the service all knelt down with the exception of the great man and myself. "Kneel down, Master Bobby," whispered my nurse, tugging at my jacket; but Master Bobby would not do anything of the sort, he had every intention of obeying his instructions to the letter, if not in the spirit.

I remember, on another occasion, Thackeray found an illustration done by his daughter to some children's rhymes which my father had written. "Very good," he exclaimed, "but you have forgotten, Annie, that it is supposed to be evening," and, dipping his finger in the ink, he proceeded on the spot to turn day into night.

A very handsome American cousin of mine, well known in the London Society of her day, came down to dinner with her hair dressed *à l'impératrice*, which was the new fashion of the moment. "I wonder," said the author, "if I should look half as well if I were to dress my hair *à l'empereur*."

"I am so fond of you now, dear Mr. Thackeray," said an old lady to him once, "but when I first knew you I thought that I should never get over your nose."

"No wonder, madam," he replied, "there is no bridge to it."

As every schoolboy, or at any rate every Carthusian, ought to know, his nose was broken in "middle briars" by one named Venables, afterwards one of his dearest friends.

Those were the days of puns, and my father was lunching with Thackeray at the Garrick. They were talking about my near future at the Charterhouse, where the great author was most anxious that I should be educated. "What a pity it is," remarked my father, "that the old picturesque dress of knee-breeches and stockings is done away with." Presently they came to the last course, and asked for some *brie*. Alas! there was none! "Why, Bobbie is just like this club," said Thackeray, "poor boy! He will have no breeches!"

On one of the many occasions of my father going abroad Thackeray gave him a farewell dinner at Greenwich. On the Terrace they met a celebrated bore, the author of one successful novel. Thackeray good-naturedly asked him to join the party. This was much resented by some of the guests, especially by one who sat next to him. The author turned to him and said: "I wrote so-and-so, of which you may have heard." "That I'm d—d if you did," replied the aggrieved one. "For though it was devilish stupid there was a grain of sense in it somewhere!"

Anthony Trollope was like a father to me when my own was abroad and many a happy holiday have I spent at his old house at Waltham Cross, exercising his heavy hunters and being accidentally run away with when his old groom complained of my riding too fast.

The old groom, Barney by name, was a character in himself. He came up to town to say "good-bye" to my father, who was going abroad for many years. My father shook hands with him affectionately, but gave him nothing. Old Barney was delighted and told Mr. Trollope: "Ah, Mr. M. is a true gentleman. Many a sovereign has he given me, but he was not going to insult me with money when I came to wish him God-speed."

I remember once dining at Lord Cheltenham's with Trollope when there was an argument, in which the author was beaten, as to who was the greatest bore in the Commons. "At any rate," shouted the vanquished one, "every one knows who is the greatest bore in your house, Cheltenham, and that is Pumpkin!" Lord Pumpkin was sitting exactly opposite, his person being unknown to the author. It was a sad sight for me to see my old friend caught in a trap, as it were, more or less set for him by the late Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, who was goading him almost to madness by contradicting and controverting all his statements.

Trollope, despite his rough exterior, had a peculiarly pretty and courteous old-world manner with women, and I always remember his adieux to Lady Cheltenham on that occasion. "I have come," he said with a gentle voice that would have astonished his male acquaintances only, "I have come to take my leave. I know that I have entered your doors to-night for the last time, and that it is no more than I deserve, but I implore you, for the sake of our long friendship, to think of me as kindly as you can!"

Was ever speech more disarming! It is only fair to add that the maligned peer behaved in a most exemplary manner and gave a fine example of *noblesse oblige*.

The *contretemps* happened at the beginning of dinner. There was a pause of a few moments—which seemed hours to me—and conversation was again renewed. Later in the evening a totally different point was being discussed, when Lord Pumpkin, speaking, as was his habit, as if he had an apple in one cheek and a potato in the other, mumbled: "I should like to hear Mr. Trollope's views on this question; I like to hear a gentleman of strong opinions."

How different was Trollope's demeanour on this occasion from Whistler's. I remember he once arrived late at a dinner at which I was present. The champagne had been already chosen and was dry in quality. "You don't like it, Jimmie," said his host, "choose your own brand." "Thanks," said Whistler more funnily than elegantly, "I can't abide bottled hiccoughs," and then chose the sweetest on the list.

I don't know why the remembrance of Whistler should call to my mind the following story: Rogers, the crabbed one, was said to have been moved with envy and venom by the praises lavished on a young man, lately come to town, who appeared to be endowed with beauty, rank, wit and learning, in short, with all the advantages of life. Rogers regarded him with jaundiced eye and was heard muttering as he walked away: "Thank God, he has got bad teeth!"

Tennyson I personally saw but seldom. I remember lunching one Sunday, when I was a boy at Charterhouse, and when they were staying at Kensington Gore—I rather think, but I am not sure, in Lady Franklin's house. A bigger boy, Cameron by name, came with me. We were going with Lionel Tennyson to the "Zoo," and to our disgust and dismay Mrs. Tennyson—as she was in those days—insisted that the butler should accompany us. This entirely upset the dignity of the two Carthusians, and, as remonstrances were of no avail, they were compelled to

act. When we reached the street, Cameron called a hansom and pushed young Tennyson in, and by a preconcerted arrangement shoved the butler in his portly part, depriving him for the moment of all power of speech, and jumped into the hansom. I followed, and off we went. Discretion being the better part of valour—of which we considered that we had shown sufficient—we decided not to return to tea as we had been invited to do, but to send young Lionel back by himself.

A friend of the great poet and a relation of my own published late in life some nursery rhymes; on hearing of the event Tennyson growled: "It is really too bad of M. I always send him my poems; what does he mean by not sending me his?" I, knowing the friend, think that he meant Modesty with a big M.

To return to my father. When he was a young man of thirty-six, he was sent to represent his Sovereign in the Faraway Islands. A man-o'-war was sent to take him from Panama, and I remember an instance of sudden temper on the part of its commander—long since dead—which it is hard to equal. He was very devoted to his rubber, and one night when my father, mother and the governess were dining with the officers, with whom the captain had quarrelled, feeling lonely and aggrieved he beat the fire quarters in the middle of dinner! The dismay and subsequent anger can be more easily imagined than described. It is only fair to say that the captain eventually apologised to all concerned for his sudden ebullition.

When we arrived at Bulibolu, the capital of the Faraway Islands, my father, before his establishment was complete, gave a dinner to the reigning monarch, the foreign representatives and others. The captain lent his steward to act as butler for the occasion. The dining-room was a long room, the kitchen being on the same floor. My mother sat at the far end from the kitchen, and at a certain period of the feast the servants arrived with the trifle and other dishes before their time. My mother whispered to the butler: "Curtis, I think there are some ducks to come before the sweet things." Curtis then proceeded to the kitchen and was heard, to the edification of the guests sitting at that end of the table, shouting: "I say, Lady M." (the sailors always gave my mother brevet rank) "says where the blazes are them sanguinary ducks?" I think that the language put into my poor mother's mouth was rather worse, but I dare not repeat it.

The American Minister was a teetotaler and had been mildly chaffed at dinner about his failing by his neighbours.

When the trifle came he took a large helping, but put down his spoon after the first mouthful, exclaiming: "Friend M., this ain't fair. I would not drink none and now you have been and liquored my pudding."

The same gentleman received a formal invitation to dine with my father on the celebration of the late Queen's birthday, and here is his answer:

"Friend M., I guess it will give me great pleasure to sup with you on your Queen Victoria's natal day."

But this was nearly half a century ago.

In isles adjacent to the Faraways, the negro washerwomen assume the titles of duchesses, and you are told that the Duchess of Westminster wishes to see you about your missing shirts, and on ascending the companion ladder are greeted by a smiling negress with glittering teeth, which many a real Duchess might envy.

In America, however, classic names are handed down from negro to negro, who would rather die than drop, or rather add, the prefix Mr. There was a coloured gentleman, Mr. Xenophon by name, who, many years ago, consented to clean boots on the steps of the Astor Hotel, of whom my father told me the following story, when he considered that my conceit wanted taking down on joining Her Majesty's Militia at the early age of seventeen. "Have a drink, Mr. Xenophon," said a Yankee Militia officer, entering the "bar," with clanking sword. "Thank you very much, sir," said the negro, "some coloured gentlemen are too proud to drink with a Militia officer, but there is no pride about Mr. Xenophon!"

This respect for the classical which the American negro possessed did not at that date extend to the representatives of the United States. The Minister of whom I have spoken as Minister to the Faraways was a little later promoted to a European Court. A Minister of another country, who was accredited here for many years and is celebrated for his courtly and somewhat disdainful presence, was strutting about in the rather exceptionally handsome uniform of his service, when the irrepressible one slapped him pleasantly, though somewhat roughly, on the back, and cried out: "Well, old Flamingo, and how are you this evening?"

One more story of the Faraways and I have done. My father went in an English man-o'-war to visit the other islands. It was very rough and many of the officers and men were ill, my father keeping quite well. This much irritated the first lieutenant, who lay prone in his berth, and kept shouting after short

intervals: "Steward, is Mr. M. ill yet?" "No, sir," would reply the steward. "Damn," would groan the lieutenant, and turn over hoping for better news at the next inquiry.

The captain had lately been promoted, and, there being no chaplain, used to read prayers. My father was a very strong Churchman and was much horrified when he heard the captain reading the Absolution, and remonstrated with him, explaining that it could only be read by a priest.

"That just shows," said the captain, "how ignorant all you landsmen are, and how fond you are of talking about what you do not understand. Of course I could not read it when I was only a commander, but now that I am 'posted' I can read what I darn please."

On another occasion, at Cowes, I was standing on deck with the admiral and captain when a German man-o'-war's boat came alongside and hailed the ship in technical English. The captain, lost in admiration, turned to the admiral and said: "There is not a man in the fleet, sir, who could do that in German." "I should think not," replied the admiral, "and he ought to be d—d ashamed of himself if he could." A true sea-dog of the now exploded type!

Stories depend upon the telling, and I remember my great-uncle, a celebrated *raconteur*, was much upset once on hearing one of his favourite stories told by his host, who entirely missed the point, and when the guests wonderingly asked where it was, quietly replied: "I am sorry that it does not amuse you, but it is not mine, it is Tollit's story."

A rather amusing case, not exactly on all fours with the above, lately happened to myself. I told a well-known humorist a story, quite new at the time, though now almost a classic, respecting a certain dignitary of the church and his Sovereign, and, to my horror, read a garbled account of it two days afterwards in an evening paper. I attacked my humorist at our next meeting and accused him, not only of stealing my story, but of spoiling it in the telling. He replied with glee:

"I did not do anything of the sort, and I have just squashed the Bishop, who accused me of sending to the press what he had told me in confidence. I answered his protest by saying: 'I did not send the story to the papers and your Lordship did not tell it to me—M. did!'"

When I had just joined what is generally considered a rather smart establishment, I was taken round the office, and one room, by a curious coincidence, was peopled by four baronets. "These," said my mentor, "are all baronets and most of them

gentlemen." I was overcome with shyness and for many days wondered which was the one left out!

At the same office last week, a very well-dressed man came in, better dressed, if possible, than usual. "How many hundreds a year does it cost you to turn out like that?" I asked.

"Hundreds!" he replied. "Not one hundred!"

Whereupon a young friend chimed in: "What an ass you are, don't you know that Brummel economises in socks!"

Ages ago, when American ladies still "guessed," a *belle* at a Washington ball said to a relation of my own: "I guess, Mr. M., if we did away with our men and you did away with your women we should make a mighty fine nation."

The same diplomatist called upon an American friend who was marrying again after frequent previous experiences. He only found the eight-year-old son by the first marriage, of whom he asked where the ceremony was to take place. "At St. Jude's, I suppose," answered the boy. "Mr. Rawlings generally marries papa!" Was ever adverb more deliciously applied?

A Frenchman, on returning to Paris, was expatiating on his pleasant visit to England and ending his encomiums by saying "Mon cher, il était tout à fait sublime." "Mais, tu sais," replied the captious friend, "mon cher, entre le sublime et le ridicule il n'y a qu'un pas." "Oui, monsieur," broke in a listening Englishman, a witty member of the *corps diplomatique*, "je le connais très bien, moi, c'est le pas de Calais, monsieur."

The same foreigner once asked what an Englishman meant when he talked of the middle class, and was told that he meant the class below his own. A perversion of this was told me by an American lady the other day. A quite shabby old woman fell down in the street and the lady rushed to help her. "Don't bother about her, lady," cried a gazing loafer, "she's all right. She's middle class, she is."

À propos of the social *nuances*, Father Healy once told me a story which I do not remember ever to have seen in print. The Lord Mayor's and an alderman's wife went together to a smart ball given by the "Gy-ards" as they call them in Ireland. The Lady Mayoress was a woman of the world, but the alderman's lady was new to the show, and, nudging the Lady Mayoress, she whispered: "I don't see a pretty girl in the room." "Howld your tongue," replied the Lady Mayoress, "don't you know, woman, that it is only the aristocracy here to-night!"

Father Healy was in great request at the Castle and at other great houses in Ireland, and one day, coming up from Bray, he found himself in the same carriage with his Bishop.

"Ah, Father Healy," said his Lordship, "I have been wanting a word with you for some time. The fact is, Father, there's a deal o' talk about you among the clergy. They say that you are too much at the Castle and with them other great Protestants, and I am glad to see you and to give you a word of advice."

"Thank you, my Lord," meekly replied the priest, "I'm much obliged to you for the hint and I will follow your Lordship's wishes in the matter. I suppose that it is a natural taste for fine company that I have and I'm thinking that I must have inherited it from my mother, for my father was just a simple man like your Lordship!"

An Oxford and a Cambridge man were arguing over the respective merits of their universities. After they had quarrelled over the colleges, their gardens, &c., the Cambridge man, by way of finishing the argument, said: "We reared the Protestant martyrs." "Yes, I know," said the other, "and we burned them."

"I belong to the Castle Street branch of the Healys of Castle Healy, as I thought all the *grand monde* knew," said the priest to a lady who was boasting of her pedigree, and foolishly imagined that she could score off the witty father.

To redress the balance of these Irish Catholic stories let me tell—though with some diffidence, for I do not know whether it may have been told before—one of an ancestor of my own. He was an Irish Archbishop, and one day stopped on his way through the country town to speak to the blacksmith at his forge. The latter was rather too fond of whiskey, and the Archbishop had been instrumental in getting his boy from home and having him apprenticed to a saddler in Dublin. The smith was evidently recovering from a drinking bout and was rather surly. The Archbishop, however, was determined to persevere, and after many gruff answers from the smith said: "Well, Mike, and how is your son getting on in Dublin?" "Oh, Pat's all right," replied the Smith, "you need not worry yourself about him; and I tell you what, your Grace, my son will be able to say what your Grace's son will never be able to say."

"What's that?" asked the Archbishop.

"Why, he will be able to say that he is a better man than his father, and I am danged if your Grace's son will ever be able to say that!" An almost perfect instance of that quaint mixture of impertinence and flattery so common among the Irish of all classes!

A lady friend of mine was travelling in Galway and heard the late Lord Morris talking to a porter at Tuam station.

"There's Lord Morris, mamma," said her daughter. "Oh, no, it can't be," she replied, "he is speaking English," and so he was, as he could, extremely well, when he liked. But what humour he had, and what stories he could tell! Here again, a fear of coming too late to the fair prevents my repeating them. They are, or ought to be, too well known. But I know that Lord Morris got the credit for many of Father Healy's tales, as no doubt did Father Healy for those of his own predecessors.

In the late forties, my father was thrown a good deal with the Irish party of the day. He gave a bachelor supper-party one evening, to which he invited one Killmallock, a boisterous and very lovable M.P. Suppers were simple in those days and the fare consisted of cold viands with beer and whiskey, but the excuse for the feast was a huge *paté-de-foie-gras* which had been sent as a present from the Dordogne. The cold beef was being carved, and Killmallock's turn came late. "I am sorry, Kill.," said my father, "to keep you waiting so long."

"Ah, never mind, Willie," was the answer. "I'm filling up the chinks while waiting with this infernal French kickshaw," and so he was, with the result that most of it was gone before any of the other guests had a chance of it.

The same gentleman, if he wished to vote "Yes" at the meetings of his party, always cried, "I'm unanimous," which was explicit, if not quite correct.

My father was also a member of the old Fielding, which was fairly Bohemian. A defunct Ambassador foolishly went there from a Court ball one night in uniform, the terrible result being that his sword was broken in two and his cocked hat thrown into the street. I cannot imagine such bad manners now at either the Beefsteak or Garrick, where white waistcoats and button-holes are much too prevalent. Fancy Thackeray and Tennyson dining in white waistcoats and going off in a motor to hear "The Great Harry" at a music-hall.

Thackeray once lent a friend a thousand pounds and exclaimed: "What a glorious profession mine is to enable me to do it." I fancy that "The Great Harry's" profession would make it easier still for him.

Georgiana

By Granville Barker

II

"She was right. It seemed to complete our friendship, not to destroy or supersede it. For three years and more the days that I spent with her were the wonderful days of my life. Nothing ever fretted our relation to each other. It was very normal, but keyed to a high pitch. Looking back, I know that this was due to her spirit rather than mine. She always met me again with such clear eyes and so unselfconscious a love that our possession of each other was as natural as breathing and quiet thought. I never questioned or doubted it. That was with her. Away from her, sitting in my office, or at the head of my table at home with my wife opposite and the children between, something she had said or done would come to my mind, and I'd rub my mental eyes, quite incredulous as to the reality of that three days' world in which I had been—how long ago?—into which I should step so many weeks hence. I was conscious, too, when the time for one of my visits approached, of preparing myself almost as for a festival. I went down to her uplifted in heart. And the three days would be days of exaltation, nothing in them commonplace; the sense that they would pass so soon and that they belonged to an order of things so removed from one's workaday life kept the spirit and the letter of their happenings closely allied. Yes, I'd go back to London feeling like a re-tuned piano.

"I suppose all this was capable of simple explanation. I had reasons for finding Georgiana's attitude towards me a very refreshing one. You never knew my wife, of course; and if you had I don't suppose that merely as a prospective son-in-law you'd have been concerned to notice her attitude towards me. She was a woman of very sound character. Duty came naturally to her; she enjoyed doing it, enjoyed adding to it. And like so many middle-class wives her capacity quite outran her opportunities. Not half her energies

were absorbed in the conventional womanly and wifely spheres of dress and home and motherhood. So she added to these an interest in my work and career, calculated—as an idealising old Bostonian friend of ours expressed it—to make her a wife indeed and no mere plaything. It was this situation in my own life which first convinced me how necessary it was to encourage women to seek careers of their own. Here was my wife, agreeable to the foolish custom which regarded her existence only as an appanage to mine, compelled to slake her intellect upon my business. She liked me in the evenings to recapitulate anything of importance that had happened in the office during the day—in fact sometimes to do the whole day's work over again for her benefit. It was very boring and a great waste of energy. She didn't do it from curiosity, for she never questioned me about my idle moments, but only to fulfil her position as helpmate, to assert her undoubted equality. Now Georgiana and I, meeting once every three months, conscienceless, with no moral tone to sustain, no conjugal dignity to assert, never talked by choice either about my office or her farm, and yet we seemed to meet on a higher not a lower plane in consequence. I feel sure my wife would have liked the self that Georgiana drew forth better than the self that belonged to her, fruit though it might be of so many years of mutual comfort and support.

"So I led this second life of mine, for three years, strangely yet uneventfully, wondering at it yet never doubting it. And, believe me or not, I felt at first neither hypocritical nor conscience-stricken. But by the end of three years several things had happened. Georgiana had had to tell her first direct lie about me. Her sister suspected something; how much I don't quite know. But she was amply satisfied by Georgiana's cool explanation and denial. Georgiana was humiliated at the readiness with which the lie was believed. It was bitter to her to have denied our relations to each other; it struck a blow at her pride in them. A more serious thing was when my youngest child was born and my wife was ill for months before and many months after, and the child died. For a whole year everything I did and thought was coloured by this anxiety. There were already the four children, the youngest ten years old by this. These had been born in the first seven years of my marriage and the care of them and the pride in them had come naturally and easily. But this aftermath seemed one of Nature's stupidities. For some time I felt certain that my wife could not live and I was wretched. Georgiana and I did not speak of her as a rule—I believe did not think of her when we were together—

but we began to now. I never concealed a thought or feeling from Georgiana and what little she didn't understand or agree with she was the more interested in. And my constant thought now was that my wife would die and that then her spirit would discover about Georgiana and me; and I wanted to know whether it would make her as unhappy in the next world as I knew it would have in this. Curiously enough, when her death did happen, years afterwards, the wonder never came back to me. Events die as our memory of them fades and we who are but a part of some greater event die too; I think now, just as completely.

"It wasn't so much, I think, that I had begun to feel guilty as that I could not bear to imagine how her feelings would be hurt by the discovery. Then, we argued, would not death set her free to contemplate us from an impersonal standpoint or at least with her judgment not warped by physical jealousy. But I was sure that no passion is merely physical. And if the spirit does survive the body's death why should it not survive in its integrity? Why, anyhow, should it be mysteriously deodorised of all the qualities that have made it individual?

"'Then,' said Georgiana, 'you can think of nothing which would make your wife tolerate or even understand our caring for each other?'

"'No more than she could imagine herself caring in that way for any one but me,' I answered. 'It's not a question of opinion and principle but of blank impossibility.'

"'I know,' said Georgiana. 'A woman once told me that men were only fickle because they simply did not understand what sex intimacy meant. Then I've more of the man than the woman in me,' she went on; 'I don't surrender myself wholly. The thought offends my self-respect somehow.'

"My wife got better slowly, and I think the death of the child was less of a grief to her than it was to me for her sake. She had been depleted of enough vitality and had none to spare for tears. But relief from anxiety only left me depressed. The depression did not lift, and then for the first time I was conscious of not wanting to go to Wiltshire as usual. Nevertheless I went, for it would have been awkward to disarrange the quarter-day's business.

"Georgiana greeted me as she always did, serenely. That was her peculiar attribute; serenity, salted by a sense of humour. And I have never known a woman more free from those little sicknesses of mind which make one attitudinise to one's friends.

"So I found myself just as much at ease with her as ever. I confessed myself. We exchanged frankness for frankness. That

was our custom, which never became either formal or morbid. In half an hour the thin ice of our three months' separation would be melted. I remember we walked from the station, though it was growing dark, for March was doing its best to go out like a lamb and I—poor Londoner—found such pleasure in feeling the soft country road under my feet.

"Georgiana asked after my wife at once and said that since Christmas she had been thinking pretty constantly of me and mine. 'I've been vexed,' she said, 'at my ignorance and isolation here.' For we made it a practice never to write to each other. We thought to count that a deprivation at first, but really I don't believe we ever felt it one.

"'I believe,' said Georgiana, 'I could have been a comfort and help to you all in London if it had been possible.'

"Rather to my surprise, she questioned me then, that evening and the next day, very closely about my feelings and behaviour towards my wife. 'When I discovered the child's death in the *Times*,' she said, 'I fell to wondering all sorts of things. Though it mayn't be love in the sentimental sense that gives life, yet it's faith in life which keeps us alive and perhaps something of that sort is needed to inform Nature's blundering with any purpose.' I didn't know what she was driving at.

"'The child shouldn't have died,' she went on. 'How much does your wife care?'

"'Less than I do,' I told her, 'oddly enough.'

"'Is it odd?' she said. 'Her care is done and perhaps you care too late.' Then she added, 'My child would not have died.'

"This silenced me. It opened up so much upon which I did not care at the moment to question her. We had talked now and then of a woman's right and duty to have children, of marriages of companionship and the like; we had talked of her own position in the matter; but even then the discussion had always remained a little impersonal. I knew from the tone of her voice that it wouldn't remain so now and I shirked it. That night she approached the subject rather differently by asking if I was conscious of having robbed my wife of affection to give to her.

"Growing stupidly nervous I asked her in a half-chaffing way if she was jealous.

"'Well,' she said, 'does it come to this, that I have stolen the life of that child and stolen it for no purpose of my own?'

"'No,' I told her, 'that's a morbid thought, besides being exceedingly obscure.'

"'But if it's only that I'm becoming morbid,' she said, 'that has to be looked into. I protest that in myself I'm not morbid and I'm not jealous. I don't want any more of your love and companionship than I have. But circumstances—circumstances!' Then for a long time she remained silent, staring into the fire. It was very late and we were sitting dressing-gowned in her room. I remember these silences had become a habit with us. Sometimes we'd sit like this into the small hours after our talk had ebbed; happy enough, I think, in each other's company, but somehow emptily happy it seemed. And the fire would burn low until one or the other might shiver and would put on a log and perhaps start talking again. My thoughts had perhaps drifted vaguely away when I felt her turn to look at me. 'Clandestinity is a curse,' she said.

"In an odd way I had begun to feel on the defensive with Georgiana. Do you know that uncomfortable feeling that some one is going to make a demand on you which you mean not to say yes to, but fear you may—as when a man calls to borrow money? It was the first sign I acknowledged of the decay of our relationship. A little fear of her was casting out just its equivalent in love. I had let some part of her nature grow strange to me. Yes, it was my fault. I had become careless, had ceased to prepare myself for our meetings. It would be harsh to say I had grown a little ashamed of them, but how should I have met the accusation? The truth as I see it now was that we differed not at all from other couples. Joy in each other had reached its workaday level; and where was our workaday? So that was why, even at the time, her little outcry of 'Clandestinity is a curse' remained with me. I was to master its meaning.

As I was going away, Georgiana asked, 'Do you think you could ever make up your mind to tell your wife about us; not now of course, but when she is strong and well again?'

"The very suddenness of the attack helped me to answer decidedly.

"'Not on any account,' I said.

"'Well,' said Georgiana, 'it would be the right thing to do and I wish you'd think it over.' And with that she kissed me good-bye.

"In the train I stared blankly for half an hour at this new situation and then shook free of the thought of it. There was nothing to be done, unless and until Georgiana spoke again. But I knew she would speak of it again.

"With the summer my wife got well, or nearly so, and my spirits got better. The tone of my home life had begun to

change too. The children had passed from the nursery to the school-room ; Mary was taking to late dinners and John, aged twelve, made a very successful entry into Repton. It seemed as if, relaxing after the strain of the past year's anxiety, my nature were to be, in future, less elastic than before. With this feeling came a certain contentment with my lot and its limitations. I recognise it now as the beginning of middle age. And it was in a changed attitude of mind that I took my usual journey to Wiltshire in June. I wanted to go, but I was conscious of having become not only careless but a little cynical about the whole business.

"Georgiana and I were sitting at the open windows of the drawing-room that evening, looking out on the little lawn and the rough meadow beyond ; lit up, they were, by such a moon as this, casting such shadows—perhaps it is that has brought the whole business so vividly to my mind to-night. She asked, 'Have you thought further about telling your wife ?' I replied no ; it was useless my thinking of it.

"'Then,' she said, 'there must be nothing between us for the future that you can't tell her. I've made up my mind.'

"It was an unpleasant shock; first of all—I discovered—to my vanity. For I did what any school-boy might have done; I spoke dictatorially, I insisted that she had no right to try and break with me in this way without warning; and without good reason, no right to break with me at all.

"'Rights,' said Georgiana, 'I should have thought the one advantage of such a connection as ours was that we couldn't acquire such unpleasant things as rights over each other.

"'Don't you think,' I asked, with quiet dignity now, 'don't you think you owe me your reasons ?'

"'You know them,' she said. 'We are still near enough to each other for that. You're only trying to open up a discussion in which I may change my mind, you think, without considering either whether you really want me to.'

"This was so true that it might have brought me to reason. But an actual physical pain began to seize me and I believe that at the moment I could have cried at this thought of losing her. I disguised it in anger.

"'You may have been considering the matter calmly for months,' I said; 'you might as well stick a knife into me as tell me like this.'

"She got up and leant against the window-post, and looked out.

"'It's so sensible of the world, isn't it ?' she said, 'to forbid you ultimately to enjoy anything in secret.' Then she turned back

to me and held out her hand with 'Good-night. You know I mean what I say.'

"I wouldn't take her hand. 'Let's talk of it again to-morrow,' I demanded.

"She smiled. 'Yes, if you like. But I'd always sooner talk of the future than the past. I've much happiness to thank you for,' she said, 'the sort of happiness I needed, at the time I most needed it. Say good-night to me.'

"Then my mood changed again. I kissed her hand and wouldn't let it go. I said I'd not been grateful enough to her for the gift of herself. I begged her not to take that away. I said that she would take with it the last touch of inspiration and colour—the last touch of romance that my life contained.

"'I'm sorry,' she said, 'but I can't be unreal any longer.' And she left me.

"I might have known that the tie between us was broken, past any knotting together. She had talked to me for the first time with all her sex's armour on and in return I had responded, almost automatically, to the conventions incumbent upon a forsaken lover. I did know it at the back of my mind. Nevertheless I gave myself a bad quarter of an hour, pacing the lawn. At first I swore that it shouldn't end here. I was angry at being robbed of something which I discovered I had got to consider my property. I was the more angry that I could not go and ventilate my grievance to anybody. I felt, I remember, in a ridiculous way, that if I could tell my wife, she would understand how unfair Georgiana was being to me and would sympathise. But from the back of my mind came the knowledge that it was all no use; so I entered the house again, shut the windows, turned out the moth-choked lamp and went to bed.

"For the remaining two days of my visit we tried to talk as candidly as ever, and it was only my fault—my fault again—that we didn't succeed. I sulked—there was no other word for it—subconsciously; though consciously I was doing my best to be reasonable. It pained Georgiana a little I could see, and that made me cherish my grievance the more. What a marvellous thing it is that however old and sensible we grow, we are always apt to behave like children where women are concerned; and I suppose they really do despise us for it. Here was I, staid and middle-aged, and beginning to be unpleasantly aware of the fact, and when I said good-bye, I couldn't help wringing her hand with averted eyes, like the self-sacrificing lover in a domestic melodrama.

"When I went down in the autumn, though, she had changed. She was nervous and irritable and seemed thoroughly unhappy.

For the first time I discovered a likeness to her sister, who, by the way, was remonstrating with Georgiana and insisting that she mustn't get self-absorbed. 'An unhealthy body and an unhealthy mind are closely connected, I maintain,' said Mrs. Merivale, and she thought it a wonderful discovery. She had also dug out the word 'valetudinarian' and she used it two or three times with great gusto. Georgiana was unapproachable. She spoke to me no more than she could help, and we went no walks. On the morning I left she apologised, not in words, but by going with me to the station and trying to revive some of the old friendliness as we went. I was ready enough, though, curiously, not very anxious to, and it was obviously an effort to her. I could see that she was glad of my departure.

"At Christmas time I didn't go down. I had had influenza and was being kept pretty strictly to the house. And it must have been some time in February that I heard in the office quite incidentally that Miss Nicholson was going to be married. We were instructed that the farm would be to let. I swallowed my surprise and a certain phantom-like chagrin that came with it. I went down in March as usual.

"Georgiana was herself again except for the thin ice of reserve, which before I used to notice only to know and be glad that it would melt. It was not only towards me she wore it, I discovered. To her sister it was a grievance. At supper she said to me, 'I should like to make you acquainted with my future husband.' Mrs. Merivale gave a little pathetic gasp. 'You tell me so carefully that it is a dead secret, Georgiana, and then you go blurting it out like that.'

"'Of course my solicitor knows,' said Georgiana.

"So on Sunday we took a walk for the purpose. It appeared that this was a young man of twenty-four, the son of the Baptist minister of the village. He was entirely beneath her in class and his position was that of an insurance agent. He had refused to enter the ministry. So having given him a wholly insufficient education his father had put him to this as being, I suggested, a sort of secular parallel to his own job. Neither Georgiana nor I seemed to enjoy this indifferent joke of mine.

"I found him to be what the local photographer would have considered an exceedingly handsome young man. Indeed, I felt sure that an enlargement of him on porcelain was the decoy-duck of some showcase or other not far away. He was quite overwhelmed with the honour to be done him and in fact seemed so dumfounded by it that I caught myself speculating—as one speculates about so many marriages—how on earth the proposal

was brought about. I discovered that his literary idol was Swinburne.

"On the way home Georgiana said, 'You're wondering why.'

"I had been walking with my head bent. Now I looked up at her.

"'I want to be married,' she said, 'because I want to have children. It may be too late soon. There was a cousin of mine—a tipsy Philistine old squire—who was in terror when his only grandson was ill lest his race should die out. I used to think that lunacy. I understand it now. Perhaps it's a part of our craving for immortality.'

"I nodded.

"'I ought to be marrying an older man and a man in my own class,' she went on, 'but there are difficulties in the way of that. First I should have to go out into Society and look for him. Then, when I found him, I might have to attract him. Well, I have rather a loathing of that sort of thing. This is a good boy. He is in most uncongenial surroundings here. I can pick him out of them. And he's very much in love with me.'

"'What else could he be?' I said.

"So like herself she did not take this for flattery.

"'Of course it is a great thing for him,' she went on, 'but I don't love him in any blind sort of way, so I hope we're arranging a fair exchange. That is what matters.'

"'Do you mean to tell him about us?' I asked.

"'Certainly not,' she said. 'What business is it of his?'

"They were married at Salisbury within the next three months and afterwards she didn't return to the farm. I have never seen her since."

By this time the shadow of the big tree had moved so far that my father-in-law and I were pacing out the queerest pattern on the lawn. I took his arm and walked him through the shadow. He looked up, quite startled by the contact and the change of direction. "How did the marriage turn out?" I asked him. He commenced to scrape up his beard and make feints at the tip of it with his lips. This was his compensating gesture at the end of an argument or a story.

"Badly," he said. "We had our fingers on its pulse all the time. A solicitor may sometimes guess at more of people's happiness or unhappiness, I suppose, than any one else, except their doctor. They went somewhere in Norfolk and started a dairy farm. It didn't do badly; so that at the end of two years we were surprised to find her wanting a sudden £500 in cash. It turned out this was to pay some debts of his. My partner pursed his lips and looked

very askew, but I thought it was not perhaps such a bad sign. One wants imagination to spend money. Men of that class are usually intolerable in their narrow thriftiness; I have shuddered at their beastly half-crown debauches. If he must sow wild oats, £500 worth was better. But later on we had to compound some debts that a woman couldn't well deal with; and still later there came an unpleasant scandal to be hushed up at the cost of seven or eight hundred pounds—an affiliation business; some wretched little scullery-maid! I began to think that kicking was too good for my young insurance agent with his wife's money in his pocket and ill-digested Swinburne in his head. Meanwhile she, poor woman, had no children.

"I came back to the office one afternoon and my partner called me into his room.

"'That young swine has been here,' he said. 'Wants me to write to his wife and say that he won't go back if she'll make him an allowance. Says he doesn't want to go back anyway in case he may lose his temper and do something he'll be sorry for. Asks what the devil she married him for—why the devil the old woman didn't adopt him? I think I'd better write. He'll be a good riddance at a couple of hundred a year. Why the devil did she touch him with the end of a barge-pole? Women are such fools!'

"So that was done. Georgiana took back her own name and went to live in Edinburgh—likes the people there, I think. Lord, she's nearly seventy now! Some years ago I came across her photograph in a man's house; white-haired, the forehead creased and the eyes dim, but the firm, fine mouth unspoiled. How many women would have given in to either of her chances of going under—broken their hearts or their health, or taken to drink or religion. Not she. Though I've had no word of her for years, I know she's as serene and as clear-hearted, her nature as well salted with humour as ever; and so it will be till she dies and when she dies. What was that fine thing old Huxley used to say to us? 'Never regret experience.' Georgiana was worthy to shake hands with him on that. She was one of those who can pay scot and lot without flinching as they go on through life."

The light in my wife's room was out.

"Perhaps I'm not to be forgiven to-night either," I said. "We must learn not to advocate lawlessness in women."

"It's getting chilly," said my father-in-law. "Let's go in."

Tono-Bungay

A Romance of Commerce

By H. G. Wells

BOOK THE THIRD: THE GREAT DAYS OF TONO-BUNGAY

CHAPTER THE THIRD (*continued*)

SOARING

§ 2

I HAD gone far beyond that initial stage; I had had two smashes and a broken rib which my aunt nursed with great energy, and was getting some reputation in the aeronautic world when suddenly, as though she had never really left it, the Honourable Beatrice Normandy, dark-eyed, and with the old disorderly wave of the hair from her brow, came back into my life. She came riding down a grass path in the thickets below Lady Grove, perched up on a huge black horse, and the old Earl of Carnaby and Archie Garvell, her half-brother, were with her. My uncle had been bothering me about the Crest Hill hot-water pipes, and we were returning by a path transverse to theirs and came out upon them suddenly. Old Carnaby was trespassing on our ground and so he hailed us in a friendly fashion and pulled up to talk to us.

I didn't note Beatrice at all at first. I was interested in Lord Carnaby, that remarkable vestige of his own brilliant youth. I had heard of him but never seen him. For a man of sixty-five who had sinned all the sins, so they said, and laid waste the most magnificent political *début* of any man of his generation, he seemed to me to be looking remarkably fit and fresh. He was a lean little man with grey-blue eyes in his brown face, and his cracked voice was the worst thing in his effect.

"Hope you don't mind us coming this way, Ponderevo," he

cried; and my uncle, who was sometimes a little too general and generous with titles, answered, "Not at all, my lord, not at all! Glad you make use of it!"

"You're building a great place over the hill," said Carnaby.

"Thought I'd make a show for once," said my uncle. "It looks big because it's spread out for the sun."

"Air and sunlight," said the earl. "You can't have too much of them. But before our time they used to build for shelter and water and the high road. . . ."

Then I discovered that the silent figure behind the earl was Beatrice.

I'd forgotten her sufficiently to think for a moment that she hadn't changed at all since she had watched me from behind the skirts of Lady Drew. She was looking at me, and her dainty brow under her broad-brimmed hat—she was dressed in a grey hat and loose unbuttoned coat—was knit with perplexity, trying, I suppose, to remember where she had seen me before. Her shaded eyes met mine with that mute question. . . .

It seemed incredible to me she didn't remember.

"Well," said the earl and touched his horse.

Garvell was patting the neck of his horse, which was inclined to fidget, and disregarding me. He nodded over his shoulder and followed. His movement seemed to release a train of memories in her. She glanced suddenly at him and then back at me with a flash of recognition that warmed instantly to a faint smile. She hesitated as if to speak to me, smiled broadly and understandingly and turned to follow the others. All three broke into a canter and she did not look back. I stood for a second or so at the crossing of the lanes, watching her recede, and then became aware that my uncle was already some paces off and talking over his shoulder in the belief that I was close behind.

I turned about and strode to overtake him.

My mind was full of Beatrice and this surprise. I remembered her simply as a Normandy. I'd clean forgotten that Garvell was the son and she the step-daughter of our neighbour Lady Osprey. Indeed, I'd probably forgotten at that time that we had Lady Osprey as a neighbour. There was no reason at all for remembering it. It was amazing to find her in this Surrey countryside, when I'd never thought of her as living anywhere in the world but at Bladesover Park, near forty miles and twenty years away. She was so alive—so unchanged! The same quick warm blood was in her cheeks. It seemed only yesterday that we had kissed among the bracken stems. . . .

"Eh?" I said.

"I say he's good stuff," said my uncle. "You can say what you like against the aristocracy, George; Lord Carnaby's rattling good stuff. There's a sort of *Savoir Faire*, something—it's an old-fashioned phrase, George, but a good one—there's a Bong-Tong. . . . It's like the Oxford turf, George, you can't grow it in a year. I wonder how they do it. It's living always on a Scale, George. It's being there from the beginning. . . ."

"She might," I said to myself, "be a picture by Romney come alive!"

"They tell all these stories about him," said my uncle, "but what do they all amount to?"

"Gods!" I said to myself; "but why have I forgotten for so long? Those queer little brows of hers—the touch of mischief in her eyes—the way she breaks into a smile!"

"I don't blame him," said my uncle. "Mostly its imagination. That and leisure, George. When I was a young man I was kept pretty busy. So were you. Even then——!

What puzzled me more particularly was the queer trick of my memory that had never recalled anything vital of Beatrice whatever when I met Garvell again, that had, indeed, recalled nothing except a boyish antagonism and our fight. Now when my senses were full of her, it seemed incredible that I could ever have forgotten. . . .

§ 3

"Oh Crikey!" said my aunt, reading a letter behind her coffee-machine. "*Here's* a young woman, George!"

We were breakfasting together in the big window bay at Lady Grove that looks upon the iris beds; my uncle was in London.

I sounded an interrogative note and decapitated an egg.

"Who's Beatrice Normandy?" asked my aunt. "I've not heard of her before."

"She the young woman?"

"Yes. Says she knows you. I'm no hand at old etiquette, George, but her line is a bit unusual. Practically she says she's going to make her mother——"

"Eh? Step-mother, isn't it?"

"You seem to know a lot about her. She says 'mother,' —Lady Osprey. They're to call on me, anyhow, next Wednesday week at four, and there's got to be you for tea."

"Eh?"

"You—for tea."

"H'm. She had rather—force of character. When I knew her before."

I became aware of my aunt's head sticking out obliquely from behind the coffee-machine and regarding me with wide blue curiosity. I met her gaze for a moment, flinched, coloured and laughed.

"I've known her longer than I've known you," I said, and explained at length.

My aunt kept her eye on me over and round the coffee-machine as I did so. She was greatly interested, and asked several elucidatory questions.

"Why didn't you tell me the day you saw her? You've had her on your mind for a week," she said.

"It *is* odd I didn't tell you," I admitted.

"You thought I'd get a Down on her," said my aunt conclusively. "That's what you thought," and opened the rest of her letters.

The two ladies came in a pony-carriage with conspicuous punctuality, and I had the unusual experience of seeing my aunt entertaining callers. We had tea upon the terrace under the cedar, but old Lady Osprey being an embittered Protestant had never before seen the inside of the house and we made a sort of tour of inspection that reminded me of my first visit to the place. In spite of my preoccupation with Beatrice, I stored a queer little memory of the contrast between the two other women; my aunt, tall, slender and awkward, in a simple blue home-keeping dress, an omnivorous reader and a very authentic wit, and the lady of pedigree, short and plump, dressed with Victorian fussiness, living at the intellectual level of palmistry and genteel fiction, pink in the face and generally flustered by a sense of my aunt's social strangeness and disposed under the circumstances to behave rather like an imitation of the more queenly moments of her own cook. The one seemed made of whalebone, the other of dough. My aunt was nervous, partly through the intrinsic difficulty of handling the lady and partly because of her passionate desire to watch Beatrice and me, and her nervousness took a common form with her, a wider clumsiness of gesture and an exacerbation of her habitual oddity of phrase which did much to deepen the pink perplexity of the lady of title. For instance, I heard my aunt admit that one of the Stuart Durgan ladies did look a bit "balmy on the crumpet," she described the knights of the age of chivalry as "korvorting about on the off-chance of a dragon," she explained she was "always old mucking about the garden," and instead of offering me a

Garibaldi biscuit, she asked me with that faint lisp of hers to "have some squashed flies, George." I felt convinced Lady Osprey would describe her as "a most eccentric person" on the very first opportunity;—"a *most* eccentric person." One could see her, as people say, "shaping" for that.

Beatrice was dressed very quietly in brown with a simple but courageous broad-brimmed hat, and an unexpected quality of being grown-up and responsible. She guided her step-mother through the first encounter, scrutinised my aunt and got us all well in movement through the house, and then she turned her attention to me with a quick and half-confident smile.

"We haven't met," she said, "since——"

"It was in the Warren."

"Of course," she said, "the Warren! I remembered it all except just the name. . . . I was eight."

Her smiling eyes insisted on my memories being thorough. I looked up and met them squarely, a little at a loss for what I should say.

"I gave you away pretty completely," she said, meditating upon my face. "And afterwards I gave away Archie."

She turned her face away from the others, and her voice fell ever so little.

"They gave him a licking for telling lies!" she said, as though that was a pleasant memory. "And when it was all over I went to our wigwam.

"You remember the wigwam?"

"Out in the West Wood?"

"Yes—and cried—for all the evil I had done you, I suppose. . . . I've often thought of it since. . . ."

Lady Osprey stopped for us to overtake her. "My dear!" she said to Beatrice, "such a beautiful gallery!" Then she stared very hard at me, puzzled in the most naked fashion to understand who I might be.

"People say the oak staircase is rather good," said my aunt, and led the way.

Lady Osprey, with her skirts gathered for the ascent to the gallery and her hand on the newel, turned and addressed a look full of meaning—overflowing indeed with meanings—at her charge. The chief meaning no doubt was caution about myself, but much of it was just meaning at large. I chanced to catch the response in a mirror and detected Beatrice with her nose wrinkled into a swift and entirely diabolical grimace. Lady Osprey became a deeper shade of pink and speechless with

indignation—it was evident she disavowed all further responsibility as she followed my aunt upstairs.

"It's dark, but there's a sort of dignity," said Beatrice very distinctly, regarding the hall with serene tranquillity, and allowing the unwilling feet on the stairs to widen their distance from us. She stood a step up, so that she looked down a little upon me and over me at the old hall.

She turned upon me abruptly when she thought her stepmother was beyond ear-shot.

"But how did you get here?" she asked.

"Here?"

"All this." She indicated space and leisure by a wave of the hand at hall and tall windows and sunlit terrace. "Weren't you the housekeeper's son?"

"I've adventured. My uncle has become—a great financier. He used to be a little chemist about twenty miles from Bladesover. We're promoters now, amalgamators, big people on the new model."

"I understand." She regarded me with interested eyes, visibly thinking me out.

"And you recognised me?" I asked.

"After a second or so. I saw you recognised me. I couldn't place you, but I knew I knew you. Then Archie being there helped me to remember."

"I'm glad to meet again," I ventured. "I'd never forgotten you."

"One doesn't forget those childish things."

We regarded one another for a moment with a curiously easy and confident satisfaction in coming together again. I can't explain our ready zest in one another. The thing was so. We pleased each other, we had no doubt in our minds that we pleased each other. From the first we were at our ease with each other. "So picturesque, so very picturesque," came a voice from above, and then: "Bee-atrice!"

"I've a hundred things I want to know about you," she said with an easy intimacy, as we went up the winding steps. . . .

As the four of us sat at tea together under the cedar on the terrace, she asked questions about my aeronautics. My aunt helped with a word or so about my broken ribs. Lady Osprey evidently regarded flying as a most undesirable and improper topic—a blasphemous intrusion upon the angels. "It isn't flying," I explained. "We don't fly yet."

"You never will," she said compactly. "You never will."

"Well," I said, "we do what we can."

The little lady lifted a small gloved hand and indicated a height of about four feet from the ground. "Thus far," she said, "thus far—*and no farther!* No!"

She became emphatically pink. "*No*," she said again quite conclusively, and coughed shortly. "Thank you," she said to her ninth or tenth cake. Beatrice burst into cheerful laughter with her eye on me. I was lying on the turf, and this perhaps caused a slight confusion about the primordial curse in Lady Osprey's mind.

"Upon his belly shall he go," she said with quiet distinctness, "all the days of his life."

After which we talked no more of aeronautics.

Beatrice sat bunched together in a chair and regarded me with exactly the same scrutiny, I thought, the same adventurous aggression, that I had faced long ago at the tea-table in my mother's room. She was amazingly like that little Princess of my Bladesover memories, the wilful misbehaviours of her hair seemed the same—her voice; things one would have expected to be changed altogether. She formed her plans in the same quick way, and acted with the same irresponsible decision.

She stood up abruptly.

"What is there beyond the terrace," she said, and found me promptly beside her.

I invented a view for her.

At the further corner from the cedar she perched herself up upon the parapet and achieved an air of comfort among the lichenous stones. "Now tell me," she said, "all about yourself. Tell me about yourself; I know such duffers of men! They all do the same things. How did you get—here? All my men *were* here. They couldn't have got here if they hadn't been here always. They wouldn't have thought it right. You've climbed."

"If it's climbing," I said.

She went off at a tangent. "It's—I don't know if you'll understand—interesting to meet you again. I've remembered you. I don't know why, but I have. I've used you as a sort of lay figure—when I've told myself stories. But you've always been rather stiff and difficult in my stories—in ready-made clothes—a Labour Member or a Bradlaugh, or something like that. You're not like that a bit. And yet you *are!*"

She looked at me. "Was it much of a fight? They make out it is. I don't know why?"

"I was shot up here by an accident," I said. "There was no fight at all. Except to keep honest perhaps—and I made no

great figure at that. I and my uncle mixed a medicine and it blew us up. No merit in that! But you've been here all the time. Tell me what you have done first."

"One thing we didn't do." She meditated for a moment.

"What?" said I.

"Produce a little half-brother for Bladesover. So it went to the Phillbrick gang. And they let it! And I and my step-mother—we let too. And live in a little house."

She nodded her head vaguely over her shoulder, and turned to me again. "Well, suppose it was an accident. Here you are! Now you're here, what are you going to do? You're young. Is it to be Parliament? I heard some men the other day talking about you. Before I knew you were you. They said that was what you ought to do. . . ."

She put me through my intentions with a close and vital curiosity. It was just as she had tried to imagine me a soldier and place me years ago. She made me feel more planless and incidental than ever. "You want to make a flying-machine," she pursued. "And when you fly. What then? Would it be for fighting? . . ."

I told her something of my experimental work. She had never heard of the soaring aeroplane, and was excited by the thought, and keen to hear about it. She had thought all the work so far had been a mere projecting of impossible machines. For her Pilcher and Lilienthal had died in vain. She did not know such men had lived in the world.

"But that's dangerous!" she said, with a note of discovery.

"Oh!—it's dangerous . . ."

"Bee-atrice!" Lady Osprey called.

Beatrice dropped from the wall to her feet.

"Where do you do this soaring?"

"Beyond the high Barrows. East of Crest Hill and the wood."

"Do you mind people coming to see?"

"Whenever you please. Only let me know——"

"I'll take my chance some day. Some day soon." She looked at me thoughtfully, smiled, and our talk was at an end.

§ 4

All my later work in aeronautics is associated in my memory with the quality of Beatrice, with her incidental presence, with things she said and did and things I thought of that had reference to her.

In the spring of that year I had got to a flying-machine that lacked nothing but longitudinal stability. My model flew like a bird for fifty or a hundred yards or so, and then either dived and broke its nose or what was commoner reared up, slid back and smashed its propeller. The rhythm of the pitching puzzled me. I felt it must obey some laws not yet quite clearly stated. I became therefore a student of theory and literature for a time, I hit upon the string of considerations that led me to what is called Ponderevo's Principle and my F.R.S., and I worked this out in three long papers. Meanwhile I made a lot of turn-table and glider models and started in upon an idea of combining gas-bags and gliders. Balloon work was new to me. I had made one or two ascents in the balloons of the Aero Club before I started my gasometer and the balloon shed, and gave Cothope a couple of months with Sir Peter Rumchase. My uncle found part of the money for these developments; he was growing interested and competitive in this business because of Lord Boom's prize and the amount of *réclame* involved, and it was at his request that I named my first navigable balloon Lord Roberts Alpha.

Lord Roberts α very nearly terminated all my investigations. My idea both in this and its more successful and famous younger brother Lord Roberts β was to utilise the idea of a contractile balloon with a rigid flat base, a balloon shaped rather like an inverted boat that should almost support the apparatus but not quite. The gas-bag was of the chambered sort used for these long forms, and not with an internal balloonette. The trouble was to make the thing contractile. This I sought to do by fixing a long fine-meshed silk net over it that was fastened to be rolled up on two longitudinal rods. Practically I contracted my sausage gas-bag by netting it down. The ends were too complex for me to describe here, but I thought them out elaborately and they were very carefully planned. Lord Roberts α was furnished with a single big screw forward and there was a rudder aft. The engine was the first one to be, so to speak, right in the plane of the gas-bag. I lay immediately under the balloon on a sort of glider framework far away from either engine or rudder, controlling them by wire-pulls constructed on the principle of the well-known Bowden brake of the cyclist.

But Lord Roberts α has been pretty exhaustively figured and described in various aeronautical publications. The unforeseen defect was the badness of the work in the silk netting. It tore aft as soon as I began to contract the balloon and the last two segments immediately bulged through the hole, exactly as an inner tube will bulge through the ruptured outer cover of a

pneumatic tyre, and then the sharp edge of the torn net cut the oiled silk of the distended last segment along a weak seam and burst it with a loud report.

Up to that point the whole thing had been going on extremely well. As a navigable balloon and before I contracted it, the Lord Roberts *a* was an unqualified success. It had run out of the shed admirably at nine or ten miles an hour or more, and although there was a gentle south-wester blowing, it had gone up and turned and faced it as well as any craft of the sort I have ever seen.

I lay in my customary glider position, horizontal and face downward, and the invisibility of all the machinery gave an extraordinary effect of independent levitation. Only by looking up as it were and turning my head back could I see the flat aeroplane bottom of the balloon and the rapid successive passages, swish, swish, swish of the vans of the propeller. I made a wide circle over Lady Grove and Duffield and out towards Effingham and came back quite successfully to the starting-point.

Down below in the October sunlight were my sheds and the little group that had been summoned to witness the start, their faces craned upward and most of them scrutinising my expression through field-glasses. I could see Carnaby and Beatrice on horseback, and two girls I did not know with them, Cothope, and three or four workmen I employed, my aunt and Mrs. Levinstein, who was staying with her, on foot, and Dimmock the veterinary surgeon and one or two others. My shadow moved a little to the north of them like the shadow of a fish. At Lady Grove the servants were out on the lawn, and the Duffield school playground swarmed with children too indifferent to aeronautics to cease their playing. But in the Crest Hill direction—the place looked extraordinarily squat and ugly from above—there were knots and strings of staring workmen everywhere—not one of them working but all agape. (But now I write of it, it occurs to me that perhaps it was their dinner hour ; it was certainly near twelve.) I hung for a moment or so enjoying the soar, then turned about to face a clear stretch of open Down, let the engine out to full speed and set my rollers at work rolling in the net and so tightening the gas-bag. Instantly the pace quickened with the diminished resistance. . . .

In that moment before the bang I think I must have been really flying. Before the net ripped, just in the instant when my balloon was at its systole, the whole apparatus was, I am convinced, heavier than air. That however is a claim that has been disputed, and in any case this sort of priority is a very trivial thing.

Then came a sudden retardation, instantly followed by an inexpressibly disconcerting tilt downward of the machine. That I still recall with horror. I couldn't see what was happening at all and I couldn't imagine. It was a mysterious inexplicable dive. The thing it seemed without rhyme or reason was kicking up its heels in the air. The bang followed immediately and I perceived I was falling rapidly.

I was too much taken by surprise to think of the proper cause of the report. I don't even know what I made of it. I was obsessed I suppose by that perpetual dread of the modern aeronaut, a flash between engine and balloon. Yet obviously, I wasn't wrapped in flames. I ought to have realised instantly it wasn't that. I did at any rate, whatever other impressions there were, release the winding of the outer net and let the balloon expand again and that no doubt did something to break my fall. I don't remember doing that. Indeed all I do remember is the giddy effect upon the landscape of falling swiftly upon it down a flat spiral, the hurried rush of fields and trees and cottages on my left shoulder and the overhung feeling as if the whole apparatus was pressing down the top of my head. I didn't stop or attempt to stop the screw. That was going on swish, swish, swish all the time.

Cothope really knows more about the fall then I do. He describes the easterly start, the tilt, and the appearance and bursting of a sort of bladder aft. Then down I swooped, very swiftly but not nearly so steeply as I imagined I was doing. "Fifteen or twenty degrees," said Cothope, "to be exact." From him it was that I learnt that I let the nets loose again and so arrested my fall. He thinks I was more in control of myself than I remember. But I do not see why I should have forgotten so excellent a resolution. His impression is that I was really steering and trying to drop into the Farthing Down beeches. "You hit the trees," he said, "and the whole affair stood on its nose among them and then very slowly crumpled up. I saw you'd been jerked out as I thought and I didn't stay for more. I rushed for my bicycle."

As a matter of fact it was purely accidental that I came down in the woods. I am reasonably certain that I had no more control then than a thing in a parcel. I remember I felt a sort of wincing, "Now it comes!" as the trees rushed up to me. If I remember that I should remember steering. Then the propeller smashed, everything stopped with a jerk and I was falling into a mass of yellowing leaves, and Lord Roberts *a*, so it seemed to me, was going back into the sky.

I felt twigs and things hit me in the face, but I didn't feel injured at the time; I clutched at things that broke, tumbled through a froth of green and yellow into a shadowy world of great bark-covered arms, and there, snatching wildly, got a grip on a fair round branch and hung.

I became intensely alert and clear-headed. I held by that branch for a moment and looked about me and caught at another and then found myself holding to a practicable fork. I swung forward to that and got a leg round it below its junction and so was able presently to clamber down, climbing very coolly and deliberately. I dropped ten feet or so from the lowest branch and fell on my feet. "That's all right," I said, and stared up through the tree to see what I could of the deflated and crumpled remains that had once been Lord Roberts *a* festooned on the branches it had broken. "Gods!" I said, "what a tumble!"

I wiped something that trickled from my face and was shocked to see my hand covered with blood. I looked at myself and saw what seemed to me an astonishing quantity of blood running down my arm and shoulder. I perceived my mouth was full of blood. It's a queer moment when one realises one is hurt and perhaps badly hurt and has still to discover just how far one is hurt. I explored my face carefully and found unfamiliar contours on the left side. The broken end of a branch had driven right through my cheek, damaging my cheek and teeth and gums, and left a splinter of itself stuck like an explorer's farthest-point flag in the upper maxillary. That and a sprained wrist were all my damage. But I bled as though I had been chopped to pieces, and it seemed to me that my face had been driven in. I can't describe just the horrible disgust I felt at that.

"This blood must be stopped, anyhow," I said, thick-headedly. "I wonder where there's a spider's web"—an odd twist for my mind to take. But it was the only treatment that occurred to me.

I must have conceived some idea of going home unaided, because I was thirty yards from the tree before I dropped.

Then a kind of black disk appeared in the middle of the world and rushed out to the edge of things and blotted them out. I don't remember falling down. I fainted from excitement, disgust at my injury, and loss of blood, and lay there until Cothope found me.

He was the first to find me, scorching as he did over the downland turf, and making a wide course to get the Carnaby plantations at their narrowest. Then presently, while he was

trying to apply the methodical teachings of the St. John Ambulance classes to a rather abnormal case, Beatrice came galloping through the trees full-tilt with Lord Carnaby hard behind her, and she was hatless, muddy from a fall and white as death. "And cool as a cucumber too," said Cothope, turning it over in his mind as he told me.

("They never seem quite to have their heads, and never seem quite to lose 'em," said Cothope, generalising about the sex.)

Also he witnessed she acted with remarkable decision. The question was whether I should be taken to the house her step-mother occupied at Bedley Corner, the Carnaby dower-house, or down to Carnaby's place at Easting. Beatrice had no doubt in the matter, for she meant to nurse me. Carnaby didn't seem to want that to happen. "She *would* have it wasn't half so far," said Cothope. "She faced us out. . . .

"I hate to be faced out of my opinions, so I've taken a pedometer over it since. It's exactly forty-three yards further.

"Lord Carnaby looked at her pretty straight," said Cothope, finishing the picture; "and then he give in."

§ 5

But my story has made a jump from June to October, and during that time my relations with Beatrice and the countryside that was her setting had developed in many directions. She came and went, moving in an orbit for which I had no data, going to London and Paris, into Wales and Northampton, while her step-mother on some independent system of her own also vanished and recurred intermittently. At home they obeyed the rule of an inflexible old maid, Charlotte, and Beatrice exercised all the rights of proprietorship in Carnaby's extensive stables. Her interest in me was from the first undisguised. She found her way to my work-sheds and developed rapidly, in spite of the sincere discouragement of Cothope, into a keen amateur of aeronautics. She would come sometimes in the morning, sometimes in the afternoon, sometimes afoot with an Irish terrier, sometimes riding. She would come for three or four days every day, vanish for a fortnight or three weeks, return.

It was not long before I came to look for her. From the first I found her immensely interesting. To me she was a new feminine type altogether—I have made it plain, I think, how limited was my knowledge of women. But she made me not simply interested in her, but in myself. She became for me some-

thing that greatly changes a man's world. How shall I put it? She became an audience. Since I've emerged from the emotional developments of the affair I have thought it out in a hundred aspects, and it does seem to me that this way in which men and women make audiences for one another is a curiously influential force in their lives. For some it seems an audience is a vital necessity, they seek audiences as creatures seek food; others again, my uncle among them, can play to an imaginary audience. I, I think, have lived and can live without one. In my adolescence I was my own audience and my own court of honour. And to have an audience in one's mind is to play a part, to become self-conscious and dramatic. For many years I had been self-forgetful and scientific. I had lived for work and impersonal interests until I found scrutiny, applause and expectation in Beatrice's eyes. Then I began to live for the effect I imagined I made upon her, to make that very soon the principal value in my life. I played to her. I did things for the look of them. I began to dream more and more of beautiful situations and fine poses and groupings with her and for her.

I put these things down because they puzzle me. I think I was in love with Beatrice, as being in love is usually understood, but it was quite a different state altogether from my passionate hunger for Marion, or my keen sensuous desire for and pleasure in Effie. Those were selfish sincere things, fundamental and instinctive, as sincere as the leap of a tiger. But until matters drew to a crisis with Beatrice, there was an immense imaginative insurgence of a quite different quality. I am setting down here very gravely, and perhaps absurdly, what are no doubt elementary commonplaces for innumerable people. This love that grew up between Beatrice and myself was, I think—I put it quite tentatively and rather curiously—romantic love. That unfortunate and truncated affair of my uncle and the Scrymgeour lady was really of the same stuff, if a little different in quality. I have to admit that. The factor of audience was of primary importance in either case.

Its effect upon me was to make me in many respects adolescent again. It made me keener upon the point of honour, and anxious and eager to do high and splendid things, and in particular, brave things. So far it ennobled and upheld me. But it did also push me towards vulgar and showy things. At bottom it was disingenuous; it gave my life the quality of stage scenery, with one side to the audience, another side that wasn't meant to show, and an economy of substance. It certainly robbed my work of high patience and quality. I cut down the toil of

research in my eagerness and her eagerness for fine flourishes in the air, flights that would tell. I shirked the longer road.

And it robbed me, too, of any fine perception of absurdity. . . .

Yet that was not everything in our relationship. The elemental thing was there also. It came in very suddenly.

It was one day in the summer, though I do not now recall without reference to my experimental memoranda whether it was in July or August. I was working with a new and more bird-like aeroplane with wing curvatures studied from Lilienthal, Pilcher and Phillips, that I thought would give a different rhythm for the pitching oscillations than anything I'd had before. I was soaring my long course from the framework on the old barrow by my sheds down to Tinker's Corner. It is a clear stretch of downland, except for two or three thickets of box and thorn to the right of my course ; one transverse trough, in which there is bush and a small rabbit warren, comes in from the East. I had started, and was very intent on the peculiar long swoop with which my new arrangement flew. Then, without any sort of notice, right ahead of me appeared Beatrice riding towards Tinker's Corner to waylay and talk to me. She looked round over her shoulder, saw me coming, touched her horse to a gallop, and then the brute bolted right into the path of my machine.

There was a queer moment of doubt whether we shouldn't all smash together. I had to make up my mind very quickly whether I would pitch up and drop backward at once and take my chance of falling undamaged, a poor chance it would have been, in order to avoid any risk to her, or whether I would lift against the wind and soar right over her. This latter I did. She had already got her horse in hand when I came up to her. Her woman's body lay along his neck, and she glanced up as I, with wings aspread and every nerve in a state of tension, swept over her.

Then I had landed, and was going back to where her horse stood still and trembling.

We exchanged no greetings. She slid from her saddle into my arms, and for one instant I held her. "Those great wings," she said, and that was all.

She lay in my arms, and I thought for a moment she had fainted.

"Very near a nasty accident," said Cothope, coming up and regarding our grouping with disfavour. He took her horse by the bridle. "Very dangerous thing coming across us like that."

Beatrice disengaged herself from me, stood for a moment

trembling, and then sat down on the turf. "I'll just sit down for a moment," she said.

"Oh!" she said.

She covered her face with her hands while Cothope looked at her with an expression between suspicion and impatience.

For some moments nobody moved. Then Cothope remarked that perhaps he'd better get her water.

As for me I was filled with a new outrageous idea begotten I scarcely know how from this incident with its instant contacts and swift emotions, and that was that I must make love to and possess Beatrice. I see no particular reason why that thought should have come to me in that moment, but it did. I do not believe that before then I had thought of our relations in such terms at all. Suddenly, as I remember it, the factor of passion came. She crouched there, and I stood over her and neither of us said a word. But it was just as though something had been shouted from the sky.

Cothope had gone twenty paces perhaps when she uncovered her face. "I shan't want any water," she said. "Call him back."

§ 6

After that the spirit of our relations changed. The old ease had gone. She came to me less frequently, and when she came she would have some one with her, usually old Carnaby, and he would do the bulk of the talking. All through September she was away. When we were alone together there was a curious constraint. We became clouds of inexpressible feeling towards one another; we could think of nothing that was not too momentous for words.

Then came the smash of Lord Roberts *a*, and I found myself with a bandaged face in a bedroom in the Bedley Corner dower-house with Beatrice presiding over an inefficient nurse, Lady Osprey very pink and shocked in the background, and my aunt jealously intervening.

My injuries were much more showy than serious, and I could have been taken to Lady Grove next day, but Beatrice would not permit that, and kept me at Bedley Corner three clear days. In the afternoon of the second day she became extremely solicitous for the proper aeration of the nurse, packed her off for an hour in a brisk rain, and sat by me alone.

I asked her to marry me.

On the whole I must admit it was not a situation that lent itself to eloquence. I lay on my back and talked through

bandages, and with some little difficulty, for my tongue and mouth had swollen. But I was feverish and in pain, and the emotional suspense I had been in so long with regard to her became now an unendurable impatience.

"Comfortable?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Shall I read to you?"

"No. I want to talk."

"You can't. I'd better talk to you."

"No," I said, "I want to talk to you."

She came and stood by my bedside and looked me in the eyes. "I don't—I don't want you to talk to me," she said. "I thought you couldn't talk."

"I get few chances—of you."

"You'd better not talk. Don't talk now. Let me chatter instead. You ought not to talk."

"It isn't much," I said.

"I'd rather you didn't."

"I'm not going to be disfigured," I said. "Only a scar."

"Oh!" she said, as if she had expected something quite different. "Did you think you'd become a sort of gargoyle?"

"L'Homme qui Rit!—I didn't know. But that's all right. Jolly flowers those are!"

"Michaelmas daisies," she said. "I'm glad you're not disfigured. And those are perennial sunflowers. Do you know no flowers at all? When I saw you on the ground I certainly thought you were dead. You ought to have been, by all the rules of the game."

She said some other things, but I was thinking of my next move.

"Are we social equals?" I said abruptly.

She stared at me. "Queer question," she said.

"But are we?"

"H'm. Difficult to say. But why do you ask? Is the daughter of a courtesy Baron who died—of general disreputableness, I believe—before his father——? I give it up. Does it matter?"

"No. My mind is confused. I want to know if you will marry me."

She whitened and said nothing. I suddenly felt I must plead with her. "Damn these bandages!" I said, breaking into ineffectual febrile rage.

She roused herself to her duties as nurse. "What are you doing? Why are you trying to sit up? Lie down! Don't touch your bandages. I told you not to talk."

She stood helpless for a moment, then took me firmly by the shoulders and pushed me back upon the pillow. She gripped the wrist of the hand I had raised to my face. "I told you not to talk," she whispered close to my face. "I asked you not to talk. Why couldn't you do as I asked you?"

"You've been avoiding me for a month," I said.

"I know. You might have known. Put your hand back—down by your side."

I obeyed. She sat on the edge of the bed. A flush had come to her cheeks, and her eyes were very bright. "I asked you," she repeated, "not to talk."

My eyes questioned her mutely.

She put her hand on my chest. Her eyes were tormented. "How can I answer you now?" she said. "How *can* I say anything now?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

She made no answer.

"Do you mean it must be No?"

She nodded.

"But——," I said, and my whole soul was full of accusations.

"I know," she said. "I can't explain. I can't. But it has to be No! It can't be. It's utterly, finally, for ever impossible. . . . Keep your hands still!"

"But," I said, "when we met again——."

"I can't marry. I can't and won't."

She stood up. "Why did you talk?" she cried. "Couldn't you *see?*"

She seemed to have something it was impossible to say.

She came to the table beside my bed and pulled the Michaelmas daisies awry. "Why did you talk like that?" she said in a tone of infinite bitterness. "To begin like that——!"

"But what is it?" I said. "Is it some circumstance—my social position?"

"Oh *damn* your social position!" she cried.

She went and stood at the further window staring out at the rain. For a long time we were absolutely still. The wind and rain came in little gusts upon the pane. She turned to me abruptly.

"You didn't ask me if I loved you," she said.

"Oh, if it's *that!*" said I.

"It's not that," she said. "But if you want to know——" She paused.

"I do," she said.

We stared at one another.

"I do—with all my heart, if you want to know."

"Then why the devil—— ?" I asked.

She made no answer. She walked across the room to the piano and began to play, rather noisily and rapidly, with odd gusts of emphasis, the shepherd's pipe music from the last act of *Tristan and Isolde*. Presently she missed a note, failed again, ran her finger heavily up the scale, struck the piano passionately with her fist, making a feeble jar in the treble, jumped up, and went out of the room. . . .

The nurse found me still wearing my helmet of bandages, partially dressed and pottering round the room to find the rest of my clothes. I was in a state of exasperated hunger for Beatrice and I was too inflamed and weakened to conceal the state of my mind. I was feebly angry because of the irritation of dressing and particularly of the struggle to put on my trousers without being able to see my legs. I was staggering about and once I had fallen over a chair, and I had upset the jar of Michaelmas daisies.

I must have been a detestable spectacle. "I'll go back to bed," said I, "if I may have a word with Miss Beatrice. I've got something to say to her. That's why I'm dressing."

My point was conceded, but there were long delays. Whether the household had my ultimatum or whether she told Beatrice directly I do not know, and what Lady Osprey can have made of it in the former case I can't imagine. . . .

At last Beatrice came and stood by my bedside. "Well ?" she said.

"All I want to say," I said with the querulous note of a misunderstood child, "is that I can't take this as final. I want to see you and talk when I'm better—and write. I can't do anything now. I can't argue."

I was overtaken with self-pity and began to snivel.

"I can't rest. You see ? I can't do anything."

She sat down beside me again and spoke softly. "I promise I will talk it all over with you again. When you are well. I promise I will meet you somewhere so that we can talk. You can't talk now. I asked you not to talk now. All you want to know you shall know. . . . Will that do ?"

"I'd like to know——"

She looked round to see the door was closed, stood up and went to it.

Then she crouched beside me and began whispering very softly and rapidly with her face close to me.

"Dear," she said, "I love you. If it will make you happy

to marry me, I will marry you. I was in a mood just now—a stupid inconsiderate mood. Of course I will marry you. You are my prince, my king. Women are such things of mood—or I would have—behaved differently. We say 'No' when we mean 'Yes'—and fly into crises. So now, Yes—yes—yes. I will. . . . I can't even kiss you. Give me your hand to kiss that. Understand I am yours. Do you understand? I am yours just as if we had been married fifty years. Your wife—Beatrice. Is that enough? Now—now will you rest?"

"Yes," I said; "but why——?"

"There are complications. There are difficulties. When you are better you will be able to—understand them. But now they don't matter. Only you know this must be secret—for a time. Absolutely secret between us. Will you promise that?"

"Yes," I said, "I understand. I wish I could kiss you."

She laid her head down beside mine for a moment, and then she kissed my hand.

"I don't care what difficulties there are," I said, and shut my eyes.

§ 7

But I was only beginning to gauge the unaccountable elements in Beatrice. For a week after my return to Lady Grove I had no sign of her, and then she called with Lady Osprey and brought a huge bunch of perennial sunflowers and Michaelmas daisies, "just the old flowers there were in your room," said my aunt with a relentless eye on me. I didn't get any talk alone with Beatrice then and she took occasion to tell us she was going to London for some indefinite number of weeks. I couldn't even pledge her to write to me, and when she did it was a brief enigmatical friendly letter with not a word of the reality between us.

I wrote back a love letter—my first love letter—and she made no reply for eight days. Then came a scrawl: "I can't write letters. Wait till we can talk. Are you better? . . ."

I think the reader would be amused if he could see the papers on my desk as I write all this, the mangled and disfigured pages, the experimental arrangements of notes, the sheets of suggestions balanced in constellations, the blottesque intellectual battlegrounds over which I have been fighting. I find this account of my relations to Beatrice quite the most difficult part of my story to write. I happen to be a very objective-minded person, I forget my moods and this was so much an affair of moods. And even such moods and emotions as I recall are very difficult to

convey. To me it is about as difficult as describing a taste or a scent.

Then the objective story is made up of little things that are difficult to set in a proper order. And love is an hysterical passion, now high, now low, now exalted, and now intensely physical. No one has ever yet dared to tell a love story completely, its alternations, its comings and goings, its debased moments, its hate. The love stories we tell, tell only the net consequence, the ruling effect. . . .

How can I rescue from the past now the mystical quality of Beatrice; my intense longing for her; the overwhelming, irrational, formless desire? How can I explain how intimately that worship mingled with a high impatient resolve to make her mine, to take her by strength and courage, to do my loving in a violent heroic manner? And then the doubts, the puzzled arrest at the fact of her fluctuations, at her refusal to marry me, at the fact that even when at last she returned to Bedley Corner she seemed to evade me?

That exasperated me and perplexed me beyond measure. I felt that it was treachery. I thought of every conceivable explanation, and the most exalted and romantic confidence in her did not simply alternate but mingled with the basest misgivings.

And into the tangle of memories comes the figure of Carnaby, coming out slowly from the background to a position of significance, as an influence, as a predominant strand in the nets that kept us apart, as a rival. What were the forces that pulled her away from me when it was manifest she did so clearly love me? Did she think of marrying him? Had I invaded some long-planned scheme? It was evident he did not like me, that in some way I spoilt the world for him. She returned to Bedley Corner, and for some weeks she was flitting about me, and never once could I have talk with her alone. When she came to my sheds Carnaby was always with her, jealously observant. (Why the devil couldn't she send him about his business?) The days slipped by and my anger gathered.

All this mingled with the making of Lord Roberts β. I had resolved upon that one night as I lay awake at Bedley Corner. I got it planned out before the bandages were off my face. I conceived this second navigable balloon in a grandiose manner. It was to be a second Lord Roberts α only more so; it was to be three times as big, large enough to carry three men, and it was to be an altogether triumphant vindication of my claims upon the air. The framework was to be hollow like a bird's bones,

air-tight, and the air pumped in or out as the weight of fuel I carried changed. I talked much and boasted to Cothope—whom I suspected of scepticisms about this new type—of what it would do, and it progressed—slowly. It progressed slowly because I was restless and uncertain. At times I would go away to London to snatch some chance of seeing Beatrice there, at times nothing but a day of gliding and hard and dangerous exercise would satisfy me. And now in the newspapers, in conversation, in everything about me, arose a new invader of my mental states. Something was happening to the great schemes of my uncle's affairs ; people were beginning to doubt, to question. It was the first quiver of his tremendous insecurity, the first wobble of that gigantic credit top he had kept spinning so long.

There were comings and goings, November and December slipped by. I had two unsatisfactory meetings with Beatrice, meetings that had no privacy—in which we said things of the sort that need atmosphere, baldly and furtively. I wrote to her several times and she wrote back notes that I would sometimes respond to altogether, sometimes condemn as insincere evasions. "You don't understand. I can't just now explain. Be patient with me. Leave things a little while to me." So she wrote to me.

I would talk aloud to these notes and wrangle over them in my workroom—while the plans of Lord Roberts β waited.

"You don't give me a chance!" I would say. "Why don't you let me know the secret? That's what I'm for—to settle difficulties!—to tell difficulties to!"

And at last I could hold out no longer against these accumulating pressures.

I took an arrogant, outrageous line that left her no loopholes ; I behaved as though we were living in a melodrama.

"You must come and talk to me," I wrote, "or I will come and take you. I want you—and the time runs away."

We met in a ride in the upper plantations. It must have been early in January, for there was snow on the ground and on the branches of the trees. We walked to and fro for an hour or more, and from the first I pitched the key high in romance and made understandings impossible. It was our worst time together. I boasted like an actor, and she, I know not why, was tired and spiritless.

Now I think over that talk in the light of all that has happened since, I can imagine how she came to me full of a human appeal I was too foolish to let her make. I don't know. I confess I

have never completely understood Beatrice. I confess I am still perplexed at many things she said and did. That afternoon anyhow I was impossible. I posed and scolded. I was—I said it—for " taking the Universe by the throat ! "

" If it was only that," she said, but though I heard I did not heed her.

At last she gave way to me and talked no more. Instead she looked at me—as a thing beyond her controlling but none the less interesting—much as she had looked at me from behind the skirts of Lady Drew in the Warren when we were children together. Once even I thought she smiled faintly.

" What are the difficulties ? " I cried. " There's no difficulty I will not overcome for you ! Do your people think I'm no equal for you ? Who says it ? My dear, tell me to win a title ! I'll do it in five years ! . . .

" Here am I just grown a man at the sight of you. I have wanted something to fight for. Let me fight for you ! . . .

" I'm rich without intending it. Let me mean it, give me an honourable excuse for it, and I'll put all this rotten old warren of England at your feet ! "

I said such things as that. I write them down here in all their resounding base pride. I said these empty and foolish things and they are part of me. Why should I still cling to pride and be ashamed. I shouted her down.

I passed from such megalomania to petty accusations.

" You think Carnaby is a better man than I ? " I said.

" No ! " she cried, stung to speech ; " No ! "

" You think we're unsubstantial. You've listened to all these rumours Boom has started because we talked of a newspaper of our own. When you are with me you know I'm a man ; when you get away from me you think I'm a cheat and a cad. . . . There's not a word of truth in the things they say about us. I've been slack. I've left things. But we have only to exert ourselves. You do not know how wide and far we have spread our nets. Even now we have a *coup*—an expedition—in hand. It will put us on a footing. . . ."

Her eyes asked mutely and asked in vain that I would cease to boast of the very qualities she admired in me.

In the night I could not sleep for thinking of that talk and the vulgar things I had said in it. I could not understand the drift my mind had taken. I was acutely disgusted. And my unwonted doubts about myself spread from a merely personal discontent to our financial position. It was all very well to talk as I had done of wealth and power and peerages, but what did

I know nowadays of my uncle's position ? Suppose in the midst of such boasting and confidence there came some turn I did not suspect, some rottenness he had concealed from me. I resolved I had been playing with aeronautics long enough, that next morning I would go to him and have things clear between us.

I caught an early train and went up to the Hardingham.

I went up to the Hardingham through a dense London fog to see how things really stood. Before I had talked to my uncle ten minutes I felt like a man who has just awakened in a bleak inhospitable room out of a grandiose dream.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

HOW I STOLE THE HEAPS OF QUAP FROM MORDET ISLAND

§ 1

"We got to make a fight for it," said my uncle. "We got to face the music!"

I remember that even at the sight of him I had a sense of impending calamity. He sat under the electric light with the shadow of his hair making bars down his face. He looked shrunken and as though his skin had suddenly got loose and yellow. The decorations of the room seemed to have lost freshness, and outside—the blinds were up—there was not so much fog as a dun darkness. One saw the dingy outlines of the chimneys opposite quite distinctly, and then a sky of such a brown as only London can display.

"I saw a placard," I said; "'More Ponderevity.'"

"That's Boom," he said. "Boom and his damned newspapers. He's trying to fight me down. Ever since I offered to buy the *Daily Decorator* he's been at me. And he thinks consolidating Do Ut cut down the ads. He wants everything, damn him! He's got no sense of dealing. I'd like to bash his face!"

"Well," I said; "what's to be done ?"

"Keep going," said my uncle.

"I'll smash Boom yet," he said with sudden savagery.

"Nothing else ?" I asked.

"We got to keep going. There's a scare on. Did you notice the rooms ? Half the people out there this morning are reporters. And if I talk they touch it up! . . . They didn't used to touch things up! Now they put in character touches—

insulting you. Don't know what journalism's coming to. It's all Boom's doing."

He cursed Lord Boom with considerable imaginative vigour.

"Well," said I, "what can he do?"

"Shove us up against time, George; make money tight for us. We been handling a lot of money—and he tightens us up."

"We're sound?"

"Oh, we're sound, George. Trust me for that! But all the same—— There's such a lot of imagination in these things. . . . We're sound enough. That's not it."

He blew. "Damn Boom!" he said, and his eyes over his glasses met mine defiantly.

"We can't, I suppose, run close-hauled for a bit—stop expenditure?"

"Where?"

"Well—Crest Hill."

"What!" he shouted. "Me stop Crest Hill for Boom!" He waved a fist as if to hit his inkpot and controlled himself with difficulty. He spoke at last in a reasonable voice. "If I did," he said, "he'd kick up a fuss. It's no good even if I wanted to. Everybody's watching the place. If I was to stop building we'd be down in a week."

He had an idea. "I wish I could do something to start a strike or something. No such luck. Treat those workmen a sight too well. No, sink or swim, Crest Hill goes on until we're under water."

I began to ask questions and irritated him instantly.

"Oh, dash these explanations, George!" he cried; "you only make things look rottener than they are. It's your way. It isn't a case of figures. We're all right—there's only one thing we got to do."

"Yes?"

"Show value, George. That's where this quap comes in; that's why I fell in so readily with what you brought to me week before last. Here we are, we got our option on the perfect filament, and all we want's canadium. Nobody knows there's more canadium in the world than will go on the edge of a sixpence except me and you. Nobody has an idee the perfect filament's more than just a bit of theorising. Fifty tons of quap and we'd turn that bit of theorising into somethin'—— We'd make the lamp trade sit on its tail and howl. We'd put Ediswan and all of 'em into a parcel with our last year's trousers and a hat, and swap 'em off for a pot of geraniums. See? We'd do it through Business Organisations, and there you are!

See ? Capern's Patent Filament ! The Ideal and the Real ! George, we'll do it ! We'll bring it off ! And then we'll give such a facer to Boom : he'll think for fifty years. He's laying up for our London and African meeting. Let him. He can turn the whole paper on to us. He says the Business Organisations shares aren't worth fifty-two—and we quote 'em at eighty-four. Well, here we are. Gettin' ready for him—loading our gun."

His pose was triumphant.

"Yes," I said, "that's all right. But I can't help thinking where should we be if we hadn't just by accident got Capern's Perfect Filament. Because, you know it was an accident—my buying up that."

He crumpled up his nose into an expression of impatient distaste at my unreasonableness.

"And after all, the meeting's in June, and you haven't begun to get the quap ! After all, we've still got to load our gun——"

"They start on Toosday."

"Have they got the brig ? "

"They've got a brig."

"Gordon-Nasmyth ! " I doubted.

"Safe as a bank," he said. "More I see of that man the more I like him. All I wish is we'd got a steamer instead of a sailing ship——"

"And," I went on, "you seem to overlook what used to weigh with us a bit. This canadium side of the business and the Capern chance has rushed you off your legs. After all—it's stealing, and in its way an international outrage. They've got two gunboats on the coast."

I jumped up and went and stared out at the fog.

"And, by Jove, it's about our only chance ! . . . I didn't dream."

I turned on him. "I've been up in the air," I said. "Heaven knows where I haven't been. And here's our only chance—and you give it to that adventurous lunatic to play in his own way—in a brig ! "

"Well, you had a voice——"

"I wish I'd been in this before. We ought to have run out a steamer to Lagos or one of those West Coast places and done it from there. Fancy a brig in the Channel at this time of year, if it blows south-west ! "

"I dessay you'd have shoved it, George. Still—— You know, George. . . . I believe in him."

"Yes," I said. "Yes, I believe in him too. In a way. Still——"

He took up a telegram that was lying on his desk and opened it. His face became a livid yellow. He put the flimsy pink paper down with a slow reluctant movement and took off his glasses.

"George," he said, "the luck's against us."

"What?"

He grimaced with his mouth in the queerest way at the telegram.

"That."

I took it up and read:

"motor smash compound fracture of the leg gordon naismith what price mordet now"

For a moment neither of us spoke.

"That's all right," I said at last.

"Eh?" said my uncle.

"*I'm* going. I'll get that quap or bust."

§ 2

I had a ridiculous persuasion that I was "saving the situation."

"I'm going," I said quite consciously and dramatically. I saw the whole affair—how shall I put it?—in American colours.

I sat down beside him. "Give me all the data you've got," I said, "and I'll pull this thing off."

"But nobody knows exactly where——"

"Nasmyth does, and he'll tell me."

"He's been very close," said my uncle, and regarded me.

"He'll tell me all right now he's smashed."

He thought. "I believe he will.

"George," he said, "if you pull this thing off——! Once or twice before you've stepped in—with that sort of Woosh of yours——"

He left the sentence unfinished.

"Give me that note-book," I said, "and tell me all you know. Where's the ship? Where's Pollack? And where's that telegram from? If that quap's to be got, I'll get it or bust. If you'll hold on here until I get back with it. . . ."

And so it was I jumped into the wildest adventure of my life.

I requisitioned my uncle's best car forthwith. I went down that night to the place of despatch named on Nasmyth's telegram,

Bampton, S.O., Oxon, routed him out with a little trouble from that centre, made things right with him and got his explicit directions ; and I was inspecting the *Maud Mary* with young Pollack, his cousin and aide, the following afternoon. She was rather a shock to me and not at all in my style, a beast of a brig inured to the potato trade, and she reeked from end to end with the faint subtle smell of raw potatoes so that it prevailed even over the temporary smell of new paint. She was a beast of a brig, all hold and dirty framework, and they had ballasted her with old iron and old rails and iron sleepers, and got a miscellaneous lot of spades and iron wheelbarrows against the loading of the quap. I thought her over with Pollack, one of those tall blonde young men who smoke pipes and don't help much, and then by myself, and as a result I did my best to sweep Gravesend clean of wheeling-planks, and got in as much cord and small rope as I could for lashing. I had an idea we might need to run up a jetty. In addition to much ballast she held remotely hidden in a sort of inadvertent way a certain number of ambiguous cases which I didn't examine, but which I gathered were a provision against the need of a trade.

The captain was a most extraordinary creature, under the impression we were after copper ore ; he was a Roumanian Jew, with twitching excitable features, who had made his way to a certificate after some preliminary naval experiences in the Black Sea. The mate was an Essex man of impenetrable reserve. The crew were astoundingly ill-clad and destitute and dirty ; most of them youths, unwashed, out of colliers. One, the cook, was a mulatto ; and one, the best built fellow of them all, was a Breton. There was some subterfuge about our position on board—I forget the particulars now—I was called the supercargo and Pollack was the steward. This added to the piratical flavour that insufficient funds and Gordon-Nasmyth's original genius had already given the enterprise.

Those two days of bustle at Gravesend, under dingy skies, in narrow, dirty streets, was a new experience for me. It is like nothing else in my life. I realised that I was a modern and a civilised man. I found the food filthy and the coffee horrible ; the whole town stank in my nostrils, the landlord of the Good Intent on the quay had a stand-up quarrel with us before I could get even a hot bath, and the bedroom I slept in was infested by a quantity of exotic but voracious flat parasites called locally "bugs," in the walls, in the woodwork, everywhere. I fought them with insect powder, and found them comatose in the morning. I was dipping down into the dingy underworld

of the contemporary state, and I liked it no better than I did my first dip into it when I stayed with my Uncle Nicodemus Frapp at the bakery at Chatham—where, by-the-by, we had to deal with cockroaches of a smaller, darker variety, and also with bugs of sorts.

Let me confess that through all this time before we started I was immensely self-conscious, and that Beatrice played the part of audience in my imagination throughout. I was, as I say, "saving the situation," and I was acutely aware of that. The evening before we sailed, instead of revising our medicine-chest as I had intended, I took the car and ran across country to Lady Grove to tell my aunt of the journey I was making, dress, and astonish Lady Osprey by an after-dinner call.

The two ladies were at home and alone beside a big fire that seemed wonderfully cheerful after the winter night. I remember the effect of the little parlour in which they sat as very bright and domestic. Lady Osprey, in a costume of mauve and lace, sat on a chintz sofa and played an elaborately spread-out patience by the light of a tall shaded lamp; Beatrice, in a white dress that showed her throat, smoked a cigarette in an arm-chair and read with a lamp at her elbow. The room was white-panelled and chintz-curtained. About those two bright centres of light were warm dark shadows in which a circular mirror shone like a pool of brown water. I carried off my raid by behaving like a slave of etiquette. There were moments when I think I really made Lady Osprey believe that my call was an unavoidable necessity, that it would have been negligent of me not to call just how and when I did. But at the best those were transitory moments.

They received me with disciplined amazement. Lady Osprey was interested in my face and scrutinised the scar. Beatrice stood behind her solicitude. Our eyes met, and in hers I could see startled interrogations.

"I'm going," I said, "to the West Coast of Africa."

They asked questions, but it suited my mood to be vague.

"We've interests there. It is urgent I should go. I don't know when I may return."

After that I perceived Beatrice surveyed me steadily.

The conversation was rather difficult. I embarked upon lengthy thanks for their kindness to me after my accident. I tried to understand Lady Osprey's game of patience, but it didn't appear that Lady Osprey was anxious for me to understand her patience. I came to the verge of taking my leave.

"You needn't go yet," said Beatrice abruptly.

She walked across to the piano, took a pile of music from the

cabinet near, surveyed Lady Osprey's back, and with a gesture to me dropped it all deliberately on to the floor.

"Must talk," she said, kneeling close to me as I helped her to pick it up. "Turn my pages. At the piano."

"I can't read music."

"Turn my pages."

Presently we were at the piano, and Beatrice was playing with noisy inaccuracy. She glanced over her shoulder and Lady Osprey had resumed her patience. The old lady was very pink, and appeared to be absorbed in some attempt to cheat herself without our observing it.

"Isn't West Africa a vile climate?" "Are you going to live there?" "Why are you going?"

Beatrice asked these questions in a low voice and gave me no chance to answer. Then taking a rhythm from the music before her, she said—

"At the back of the house is a garden—a door in the wall—on the lane. Understand?"

I turned over two pages without any effect on her playing.

"When?" I asked.

She dealt in chords. "I wish I *could* play this!" she said. "Midnight."

She gave her attention to the music for a time.

"You may have to wait."

"I'll wait."

She brought her playing to an end by—as schoolboys say—"stashing it up."

"I can't play to-night," she said, standing up and meeting my eyes. "I wanted to give you a parting voluntary."

"Was that Wagner, Beatrice?" asked Lady Osprey, looking up from her cards. "It sounded very confused. . . ."

I took my leave. I had a curious twinge of conscience as I parted from Lady Osprey. Either a first intimation of middle age or my inexperience in romantic affairs was to blame, but I felt a very distinct objection to the prospect of invading this good lady's premises from the garden door. I motored up to the pavilion, found Cothope reading in bed, told him for the first time of West Africa, spent an hour with him in settling all the outstanding details of Lord Roberts β, and left that in his hands to finish against my return. I sent the motor back to Lady Grove, and still wearing my fur coat—for the January night was damp and bitterly cold—walked back to Bedley Corner. I found the lane to the back of the dower-house without any difficulty, and was at the door in the wall with ten minutes to

spare. I lit a cigar and fell to walking up and down. This queer flavour of intrigue, this nocturnal garden-door business, had taken me by surprise and changed my mental altitudes. I was startled out of my egotistical pose, and thinking intently of Beatrice, of that elfin quality in her that always pleased me, that always took me by surprise, that had made her, for example, so instantly conceive this meeting.

She came within a minute of midnight; the door opened softly and she appeared, a short, grey figure in a motor-coat of sheepskin, bare-headed to the cold drizzle. She flitted up to me, and her eyes were shadows in her dusky face.

"Why are you going to West Africa?" she asked at once.

"Business crisis. I have to go."

"You're not going——? You're coming back?"

"Three or four months," I said, "at most."

"Then, it's nothing to do with me?"

"Nothing," I said. "Why should it have?"

"Oh, that's all right. One never knows what people think or what people fancy." She took me by the arm. "Let's go for a walk," she said.

I looked about me at darkness and rain.

"That's all right," she laughed. "We can go along the lane and into the Old Woking Road. Do you mind? Of course you don't. My head. It doesn't matter. One never meets anybody."

"How do you know?"

"I've wandered like this before. . . . Of course. Did you think"—she nodded her head back at her home—"that's all?"

"No, by Jove!" I cried; "it's manifest it isn't."

She took my arm and turned me down the lane. "Night's my time," she said by my side. "There's a touch of the were-wolf in my blood. One never knows in these old families. . . . I've wondered often. . . . Here we are, anyhow, alone in the world. Just darkness and cold and a sky of clouds and wet. And we—together. I like the wet on my face and hair, don't you? When do you sail?"

I told her to-morrow.

"Oh, well, there's no to-morrow now. You and I!" She stopped and confronted me.

"You don't say a word except to answer!"

"No," I said.

"Last time you did all the talking."

"Like a fool. Now——"

We looked at each other's two dim faces. "You're glad to be here?"

"I'm glad—I'm beginning to be—it's more than glad."

She put her hands on my shoulders and drew me down to kiss her.

"Ah!" she said, and for a moment or so we just clung to one another.

"That's all," she said, releasing herself. "What bundles of clothes we are to-night. I felt we should kiss some day again. Always. The last time was ages ago."

"Among the fern stalks."

"Among the bracken. You remember. And your lips were cold. Were mine? The same lips—after so long—after so much! . . . And now let's trudge through this blotted-out world together for a time. Yes, let me take your arm. Just trudge, see? Hold tight to me because I know the way—and don't talk—don't talk. Unless you want to talk. . . . Let me tell you things! You see, dear, the whole world *is* blotted out—it's dead and gone, and we're in this place. This dark wild place. . . . We're dead. Or all the world is dead. No! We're dead. No one can see us. We're shadows. We've got out of our positions, out of our bodies—and together. That's the good thing of it—together. But that's why the world can't see us and why we hardly see the world. Sssh! Is it all right?"

"It's all right," I said.

We stumbled along for a time in a close silence. We passed a dim-lit, rain-veiled window.

"The silly world," she said, "the silly world! It eats and sleeps. If the wet didn't patter so from the trees we'd hear it snoring. It's dreaming such stupid things—stupid judgments. It doesn't know we are passing, we two—free of it—clear of it. You and I!"

We pressed against each other reassuringly.

"I'm glad we're dead," she whispered. "I'm glad we're dead. I was tired of it, dear. I was so tired of it, dear, and so entangled."

She stopped abruptly.

We splashed through a string of puddles. I began to remember things I had meant to say.

"Look here!" I cried. "I want to help you beyond measure. You are entangled. What is the trouble? I asked you to marry me. You said you would. But there's something."

My thoughts sounded clumsy as I said them.

"Is it something about my position? . . . Or is it something—perhaps—about some other man?"

There was an immense assenting silence.

"You've puzzled me so. At first—I mean quite early—I thought you meant to make me marry you."

"I did."

"And then——?"

"To-night," she said after a long pause, "I can't explain. No! I can't explain. I love you! But—explanations! To-night—— My dear, here we are in the world alone—and the world doesn't matter. Nothing matters. Here am I in the cold with you—and my bed away there deserted. I'd tell you—— I *will* tell you when things enable me to tell you, and soon enough they will. But to-night—— I won't. I won't."

She left my side and went in front of me.

She turned upon me. "Look here," she said, "I insist upon your being dead. Do you understand? I'm not joking. To-night you and I are out of life. It's our time together. There may be other times, but this we won't spoil. We're—in Hades if you like. Where there's nothing to hide and nothing to tell. No bodies even. No bothers. We loved each other—down there—and were kept apart, but now it doesn't matter. It's over. . . . If you won't agree to that—I will go home."

"I wanted," I began.

"I know. Oh! my dear, if you'd only understand I understand. If you'd only not care—and love me to-night."

"I do love you," I said.

"Then *love* me," she answered, "and leave all these things that bother you. Love me! Here I am!"

"But——!"

"No!" she said.

"Well, have your way."

So she carried her point, and we wandered into the night together and Beatrice talked to me of love. . . .

I'd never heard a woman before in all my life who could talk of love, who could lay bare and develop and touch with imagination all that mass of fine emotion every woman, it may be, hides. She had read of love, she had thought of love, a thousand sweet lyrics had sounded through her brain and left fine fragments in her memory; she poured it out, all of it, shamelessly, skilfully, for me. I cannot give any sense of that talk, I cannot even tell how much of the delight of it was the magic of her voice, the glow of her near presence. And always we walked swathed warmly through a chilly air, along dim,

interminable greasy roads—with never a soul abroad it seemed but us, never a beast in the fields.

"Why do people love each other?" I said.

"Why not?"

"But why do I love you? Why is your voice better than any voice, your face sweeter than any face?"

"And why do I love you?" she asked; "not only what is fine in you, but what isn't? Why do I love your dulness, your arrogance? For I do. To-night I love the very raindrops on the fur of your coat!..."

So we talked; and at last very wet, still glowing but a little tired, we parted at the garden door. We had been wandering for two hours in our strange irrational community of happiness, and all the world about us, and particularly Lady Osprey and her household, had been asleep—and dreaming of anything rather than Beatrice in the night and rain.

She stood in the doorway a muffled figure with eyes that glowed.

"Come back," she whispered. "I shall wait for you."

She hesitated.

She touched the lapel of my coat. "I love you *now*," she said, and lifted her face to mine.

I held her to me and was atremble from top to toe. "O God!" I cried. "And I must go!"

She slipped from my arms and paused regarding me. For an instant the world seemed full of fantastic possibilities.

"Yes, *Go!*" she said, and vanished and slammed the door upon me, leaving me alone like a man new fallen from fairyland in the black darkness of the night.

§ 3

That expedition to Mordet Island stands apart from all the rest of my life, detached, a piece by itself with an atmosphere of its own. It would, I suppose, make a book by itself—it has made a fairly voluminous official report—but so far as this novel of mine goes it is merely an episode, a contributory experience, and I mean to keep it at that.

Vile weather, an impatient fretting against unbearable slowness and delay, sea-sickness, general discomfort and humiliating self-revelation are the master values of these memories.

I was sick all through the journey out. I don't know why. It was the only time I was ever sea-sick and I have seen some pretty bad weather since I became a boat-builder. But that phantom

smell of potatoes was peculiarly vile to me. Coming back on the brig we were all ill, every one of us, so soon as we got to sea, poisoned I firmly believe by quap. On the way out most of the others recovered in a few days, but the stuffiness below, the coarse food, the cramped dirty accommodation kept me, if not actually sea-sick, in a state of acute physical wretchedness the whole time. The ship abounded in cockroaches and more intimate vermin. I was cold all the time until after we passed Cape Verde, then I became steamily hot; I had been too pre-occupied with Beatrice and my keen desire to get the *Maud Mary* under way at once, to consider a proper wardrobe for myself, and in particular I lacked a coat. Heavens! how I lacked that coat! And, moreover, I was cooped up with two of the worst bores in Christendom, Pollack and the captain. Pollack, after conducting his illness in a style better adapted to the capacity of an opera house than a small compartment, suddenly got insupportably well and breezy, and produced a manly pipe in which he smoked a tobacco as blonde as himself, and divided his time almost equally between smoking it and trying to clean it. "There's only three things you *can* clean a pipe with," he used to remark with a twist of paper in hand. "The best's a feather, the second's a straw, and the third's a girl's hairpin. I never see such a ship. You can't find any of 'em. Last time I came this way I did find hairpins anyway, and found 'em on the floor of the captain's cabin. Regular deposit. Eh? . . . Feelin' better?"

At which I usually swore.

"Oh, you'll be all right soon. Don't mind my puffin' a bit? Eh?"

He never tired of asking me to "have a hand at Nap. Good game. Makes you forget it, and that's half the battle."

He would sit swaying with the rolling of the ship and suck at his pipe of blonde tobacco and look with an inexpressibly sage but somnolent blue eye at the captain by the hour together. "Captain's a Card," he would say over and over again as the outcome of these meditations. "He'd like to know what we're up to. He'd like to know—no end."

That did seem to be the captain's ruling idea. But he also wanted to impress me with the notion that he was a gentleman of good family and to air a number of views adverse to the English, to English literature, to the English constitution, and the like. He had learnt the sea in the Roumanian navy, and English out of a book; he would still at times pronounce the e's at the end of "there" and "here"; he was a naturalised

Englishman, and he drove me into a reluctant and uncongenial patriotism by his everlasting carping at things English. Pollack would set himself to "draw him out." Heaven alone can tell how near I came to murder.

Fifty-three days I had outward, cooped up with these two and a shy and profoundly depressed mate who read the Bible on Sundays and spent the rest of his leisure in lethargy, three and fifty days of life cooped up in a perpetual smell, in a persistent sick hunger that turned from the sight of food, in darkness, cold and wet, in a lightly ballasted ship that rolled and pitched and swayed. And all the time the sands in the hour-glass of my uncle's fortunes were streaming out. Misery! Amidst it all I remember only one thing brightly, one morning of sunshine in the Bay of Biscay and a vision of frothing waves, sapphire green, a bird following our wake and our masts rolling about the sky. Then wind and rain close in on us again.

You must not imagine they were ordinary days, days I mean of an average length; they were not so much days as long damp slabs of time that stretched each one to the horizon, and much of that length was night. One paraded the staggering deck in a borrowed sou'-wester hour after hour in the chilly, windy, splashing and spitting darkness, or sat in the cabin, bored and ill, and looked at the faces of those inseparable companions by the help of a lamp that gave smell rather than light. Then one would see going up, up, up, and then sinking down, down, down, Pollack, extinct pipe in mouth, humorously observant, bringing his mind slowly to the seventy-seventh decision that the captain was a Card, while the words flowed from the latter in a nimble incessant flood. "Dis England eet is not a country aristocratic, no! Eet is a glorified *bourgeoisie!* Eet is plutocratic. In England dere is no aristocracy since de Wars of Roses. In the rest of Europe east of the Latins, yes; in England, no.

"Eet is all middle-class, youra England. Everything you look at, middle-class. Respectable! Everything good—eet is, you say, shocking. Madame Grundy! Eet is all limited and computing and self-seeking. Dat is why your art is so limited, youra fiction, your philosophia, why you are all so inartistic. You want nothing but profit! What will pay! What would you? . . ."

He had all those violent adjuncts to speech we Western Europeans have abandoned, shruggings of the shoulders, waving of the arms, thrusting out of the face, wonderful grimaces and twiddlings of the hands under your nose until you wanted to hit them away. Day after day it went on, and I had to keep my

anger to myself, to reserve myself for the time ahead when it would be necessary to see the quap was got aboard and stowed—knee-deep in this man's astonishment. I knew he would make a thousand objections to all we had before us. He talked like a drugged man. It ran glibly over his tongue. And all the time one could see his seamanship fretting him, he was gnawed by responsibility, perpetually uneasy about the ship's position, perpetually imagining dangers. If a sea hit us exceptionally hard he'd be out of the cabin in an instant making an outcry of inquiries, and he was pursued by a dread of the hold, of ballast shifting, of insidious wicked leaks. As we drew near the African coast his fear of rocks and shoals became infectious.

"I do not know dis coast," he used to say. "I cama hera because Gordon-Nasmyth was coming too. Den he does not come!"

"Fortunes of war," I said, and tried to think in vain if any motive but sheer haphazard could have guided Gordon-Nasmyth in the choice of these two men. I think perhaps Gordon-Nasmyth had the artistic temperament and wanted contrasts, and also that the captain helped him to express his own malignant Anti-Britishism. He was indeed an exceptionally inefficient captain. On the whole I was glad I had come even at the eleventh hour to see to things.

(The captain, by-the-by, did at last, out of sheer nervousness, get aground at the end of Mordet Island, but we got off in an hour or so with a swell and a little hard work in the boat.)

I suspected the mate of his opinion of the captain long before he expressed it. He was, I say, a taciturn man, but one day speech broke through him. He had been sitting at the table with his arms folded on it, musing drearily, pipe in mouth, and the voice of the captain drifted down from above.

The mate lifted his heavy eyes to me and regarded me for a moment. Then he began to heave with the beginnings of speech. He disembarrassed himself of his pipe. I cowered with expectation. Speech was coming at last. Before he spoke he nodded reassuringly once or twice.

"'E——"

He moved his head strangely and mysteriously, but a child might have known he spoke of the captain.

"'E's a foreigner."

He regarded me doubtfully for a time, and at last decided for the sake of lucidity to clench the matter.

"That's what 'E is—a *Dago!*"

He nodded like a man who gives a last tap to a nail, and I could

see he considered his remark well and truly laid. His face, though still resolute, became as tranquil and uneventful as a huge hall after a public meeting has dispersed out of it, and finally he closed and locked it with his pipe.

"Roumanian Jew, isn't he?" I said.

He nodded darkly and almost forbiddingly.

More would have been too much. The thing was said. But from that time forth I knew I could depend upon him and that he and I were friends. It happens I never did have to depend upon him, but that does not affect our relationship.

Forward the crew lived lives very much after the fashion of ours, more crowded, more cramped and dirty, wetter, steamier, more verminous. The coarse food they had was still not so coarse but that they did not think they were living "like fighting cocks." So far as I could make out they were all nearly destitute men, hardly any of them had a proper sea-outfit, and what small possessions they had were a source of mutual distrust. And as we pitched and floundered southward they gambled and fought, were brutal to one another, argued and wrangled loudly, until we protested at the uproar. . . .

There's no romance about the sea in a small sailing ship as I saw it. The romance is in the mind of the landsman dreamer. These brigs and schooners and brigantines that still stand out from every little port are relics from an age of petty trade, as rotten and obsolescent as a Georgian house that has sunken into a slum. They are indeed just floating fragments of slum, much as icebergs are floating fragments of glacier. The civilised man who has learnt to wash, who has developed a sense of physical honour, of cleanly temperate feeding, of time, can endure them no more. They pass, and the clanking coal-wasting steamers will follow them, giving place to cleaner, finer things. . . .

But so it was I made my voyage to Africa, and came at last into a world of steamy fogs and a hot smell of vegetable decay, and into sound and sight of surf and distant intermittent glimpses of the coast. I lived a strange concentrated life through all that time, such a life as a creature must do that has fallen in a well. All my former ways ceased, all my old vistas became memories.

The situation I was saving was very small and distant now; I felt its urgency no more. Beatrice and Lady Grove, my uncle and the Hardingham, my soaring in the air and my habitual wide vision of swift effectual things, became as remote as if they were in some world I had left for ever. . . .

§ 4

All these African memories stand by themselves. It was for me an expedition into the realms of undisciplined nature out of the world that is ruled by men, my first bout with that hot side of our mother that gives you the jungle—that cold side that gives you the air-eddy I was beginning to know passing well. They are memories woven upon a fabric of sunshine and heat and a constant warm smell of decay. They end in rain—such rain as I had never seen before, a vehement, a frantic downpouring of water, but our first slow passage through the channels behind Mordet Island was in incandescent sunshine.

There we go in my memory still, a blistered dirty ship with patched sails and a battered mermaid to represent *Maud Mary*, sounding and taking thought between high banks of forest whose trees come out knee-deep at last in the water. There we go with a little breeze on our quarter, Mordet Island rounded and the quap it might be within a day of us.

Here and there strange blossoms woke the dank intensities of green with a trumpet-call of colour. Things crept among the jungle and peeped and dashed back rustling into stillness. Always in the sluggishly drifting, opaque water were eddyings and stirrings ; little rushes of bubbles came chuckling up lightheartedly from this or that submerged conflict and tragedy ; now and again were crocodiles like a stranded fleet of logs basking in the sun. Still it was by day, a dreary stillness broken only by insect sounds and the creaking and flapping of our progress, by the calling of the soundings and the captain's confused shouts ; but in the night as we lay moored to a clump of trees the darkness brought a thousand swampy things to life and out of the forest came screamings and howlings, screamings and yells that made us glad to be afloat And once we saw between the tree stems long blazing fires. We passed two or three villages landward, and brown-black women and children came and stared at us and gesticulated, and once a man came out in a boat from a creek and hailed us in an unknown tongue ; and so at last we came to a great open place, a broad lake rimmed with a desolation of mud and bleached refuse and dead trees, free from crocodiles or water birds or sight or sound of any living thing, and saw far off, even as Nasmyth had described, the ruins of the deserted station and hard by two little heaps of buff-hued rubbish under a great rib of rock, the quap ! The forest receded. The land to the right of us fell away and became barren, and far off across a notch in its backbone was surf and the sea.

We took the ship in towards those heaps and the ruined jetty slowly and carefully. The captain came and talked.

"This is eet?" he said.

"Yes," said I.

"Is eet for trade we haf come?"

This was ironical.

"No," said I. . . .

"Gordon-Nasmyth would haf told me long ago what it ees for we haf come."

"I'll tell you now," I said. "We are going to lay in as close as we can to those two heaps of stuff—you see them—under the rock. Then we are going to chuck all our ballast overboard and take those in. Then we're going home."

"May I presume to ask—is eet gold?"

"No," I said incivilly, "it isn't."

"Then what is it?"

"It's stuff—of some commercial value."

"We can't do eet," he said.

"We can," I answered reassuringly.

"We can't," he said as confidently. "I don't mean what you mean. You know so liddle—but—dis is forbidden country."

I turned on him suddenly angry and met bright excited eyes. For a minute we scrutinised one another. Then I said, "That's our risk. Trade is forbidden. But this isn't trade. . . . This thing's got to be done."

His eyes glittered and he shook his head. . . .

The brig stood in slowly through the twilight towards this strange scorched and blistered stretch of beach, and the man at the wheel strained his ears to listen to the low-voiced angry argument that began between myself and the captain, that was presently joined by Pollack. We moored at last within a hundred yards of our goal, and all through our dinner and far into the night we argued intermittently and fiercely with the captain about our right to load just what we pleased. "I will haf nothing to do with it," he persisted. "I wash my hands." It seemed that night as though we argued in vain. "If it is not trade," he said, "it is prospecting and mining. That is worse. Any one who knows anything—outside England—knows that is worse."

We argued and I lost my temper and swore at him. Pollack kept cooler and chewed his pipe watchfully with that blue eye of his upon the captain's gestures. Finally I went on deck to cool. The sky was overcast. I discovered all the men were in a knot forward, staring at the faint quivering luminosity that

had spread over the heaps of quap, a phosphorescence such as one sees at times on rotting wood. And about the beach east and west there were patches and streaks of something like diluted moonshine. . . .

In the small hours I was still awake and turning over scheme after scheme in my mind whereby I might circumvent the captain's opposition. I meant to get that quap aboard if I had to kill some one to do it. Never in my life had I been so thwarted! After this intolerable voyage! There came a rap at my cabin door and then it opened and I made out a bearded face. "Come in," I said, and a black voluble figure I could just see obscurely came in to talk in my private ear and fill my cabin with its whisperings and gestures. It was the captain. He too had been awake and thinking things over. He had come to explain—enormously. I lay there hating him and wondering if I and Pollack could lock him in his cabin and run the ship without him. "I do not want to spoil dis expedition," emerged from a cloud of protestations, and then I was able to disentangle "a commission—shush a small commission—for special risks!" "Special risks" became frequent. I let him explain himself out. It appeared he was also demanding an apology for something I had said. No doubt I had insulted him generously. At last came definite offers. I broke my silence and bargained.

"Pollack!" I cried and hammered the partition.

"What's up?" asked Pollack.

I stated the case concisely.

There came a silence.

"He's a Card," said Pollack. "Let's give him his commision. I don't mind."

"Eh?" I cried.

"I said he was a Card, that's all," said Pollack. "I'm coming."

He appeared in my doorway a faint white figure and joined our vehement whisperings. . . .

We had to buy the captain off; we had to promise him ten per cent. of our problematical profits. We were to give him ten per cent. on what we sold the cargo for over and above his legitimate pay, and I found in my out-bargained and disordered state small consolation in the thought that I, as the Gordon-Nasmyth expedition, was to sell the stuff to myself as Business Organisations. And he further exasperated me by insisting on having our bargain in writing. "In the form of a letter," he insisted.

"All right," I acquiesced, "in the form of a letter. Here goes! Get a light!"

"And the apology," he said folding up the letter.

"All right," I said; "apology."

My hand shook with anger as I wrote and afterwards I could not sleep for hate of him. At last I got up. I suffered, I found, from an unusual clumsiness. I struck my toe against my cabin door, and cut myself as I shaved. I found myself at last pacing the deck under the dawn in a mood of extreme exasperation. The sun rose abruptly and splashed light blindingly into my eyes and I swore at the sun. I found myself imagining fresh obstacles with the men and talking aloud in anticipatory rehearsal of the consequent row.

The malaria of the quap was already in my blood.

§ 5

Sooner or later the ridiculous embargo that now lies upon all the coast eastward of Mordet Island will be lifted and the reality of the deposits of quap ascertained. I am sure myself that we were merely taking the outcrop of a stratum of nodulated deposits that dip steeply seaward. Those heaps were merely the crumbled-out contents of two irregular cavities in the rock, they are as natural as any talus or heap of that kind, and the mud along the edge of the water for miles is mixed with quap, and is radio-active and lifeless and faintly phosphorescent at night. But the reader will find the full particulars of my impression of all this in the *Geological Magazine* for October 1905, and to that I must refer him. There too he will find my unconfirmed theories of its nature. If I am right it is something far more significant from the scientific point of view than those incidental constituents of various rare metals, pitchblende, rutile, and the like, upon which the revolutionary discoveries of the last decade are based. Those are just little molecular centres of disintegration, of that mysterious decay and rotting of those elements, elements once regarded as the most stable things in nature. But there is something—the only word that comes near it is *cancerous*, and that is not very near—about the whole of quap, something that creeps and lives as a disease lives by destroying; an elemental stirring and disarrangement, incalculably maleficent and strange.

This is no imaginative comparison of mine. To my mind radio-activity is a real disease of matter. Moreover it is a contagious disease. It spreads. You bring those debased and

crumbling atoms near others and those too presently catch the trick of swinging themselves out of coherent existence. It is in matter exactly what the decay of our old culture is in society, a loss of traditions and distinctions and assured reactions. When I think of these inexplicable dissolvent centres that have come into being in our globe—these quap heaps are surely by far the largest that have yet been found in the world, the rest as yet mere specks in grains and crystals—I am haunted by a grotesque fancy of the ultimate eating away and dry-rotting and dispersal of all our world. So that while man still struggles and dreams his very substance will change and crumble from beneath him. I mention this here as a queer persistent fancy. Suppose indeed that is to be the end of our planet; no splendid climax and finale, no towering accumulation of achievements but just—atomic decay! I add that to the ideas of the suffocating comet, the dark body out of space, the burning out of the sun, the distorted orbit, as a new and far more possible end—as Science can see ends—to this strange by-play of matter that we call human life. I do not believe this can be the end; no human soul can believe in such an end and go on living, but to it science points as a possible thing, science and reason alike. If single human beings—if one single rickety infant—can be born as it were by accident and die futile, why not the whole race? These are questions I have never answered, that now I never attempt to answer, but the thought of quap and its mysteries brings them back to me.

I can witness that the beach and mud for two miles or more either way was a lifeless beach—lifeless as I could have imagined no tropical mud could ever be, and all the dead branches and leaves and rotting dead fish and so forth that drifted ashore became presently shrivelled and white. Sometimes crocodiles would come up out of the water and bask, and now and then water birds would explore the mud and rocky ribs that rose out of it, in a mood of transitory speculation. That was its utmost animation. And the air felt at once hot and austere, dry and blistering, and altogether different to the warm moist embrace that had met us at our first African landfall and to which we had grown accustomed.

I believe that the primary influence of the quap upon us was to increase the conductivity of our nerves, but that is a mere unjustifiable speculation on my part. At any rate it gave a sort of east wind effect to life. We all became irritable, clumsy, languid and disposed to be impatient with our languor. We moored the brig to the rocks with difficulty, and got aground on mud and

decided to stick there and tow off when we had done—the bottom was as greasy as butter. Our efforts to fix up planks and sleepers in order to wheel the quap aboard were as ill-conceived as that sort of work can be—and that sort of work can at times be very ill-conceived. The captain had a superstitious fear of his hold; he became wildly gesticulatory and expository and incompetent at the bare thought of it. His shouts still echo in my memory, becoming, as each crisis approached, less and less like any known tongue.

But I cannot now write the history of those days of blundering and toil, of how Milton, one of the boys, fell from a plank to the beach, thirty feet perhaps, with his barrow and broke his arm and I believe a rib, of how I and Pollack set the limb and nursed him through the fever that followed, of how one man after another succumbed to a feverish malaria, and how I—by virtue of my scientific reputation—was obliged to play the part of doctor and dose them with quinine, and then finding that worse than nothing, with rum and small doses of Easton's Syrup, of which there chanced to be a case of bottles aboard—Heaven and Gordon-Nasmyth know why. For three long days we lay in misery and never shipped a barrow-load. Then, when they resumed, the men's hands broke out into sores. There were no gloves available; and I tried to get them, while they shovelled and wheeled, to cover their hands with stockings or greased rags. They would not do this on account of the heat and discomfort. This attempt of mine did however direct their attention to the quap as the source of their illness and precipitated what in the end finished our lading, an informal strike. "We've had enough of this," they said, and they meant it. They came aft to say as much. They cowed the captain.

Through all these days the weather was variously vile, first a furnace heat under a sky of a scowling intensity of blue, then a hot fog that stuck in one's throat like wool and turned the men on the planks into colourless figures of giants, then a wild burst of thunderstorms, mad elemental uproar and rain. Through it all, against illness, heat, confusion of mind, one master impetus prevailed with me, to keep the shipping going, to maintain one motif, at least, whatever else arose or ceased, the chuff of the spades, the squeaking and shriek of the barrows, the pluppa, pluppa, pluppa, as the men came trotting along the swinging high planks, and then at last, the dollop, dollop, as the stuff shot into the hold. "Another barrow-load, thank God! Another fifteen hundred, or it may be two thousand pounds, for the saving of Ponderevo! . . ."

I found out many things about myself and humanity in those weeks of effort behind Mordet Island. I understand now the heart of the sweater, of the harsh employer, of the nigger-driver. I had brought these men into a danger they didn't understand, I was fiercely resolved to overcome their oppositions and bend and use them for my purpose and I hated the men. But I hated all humanity during the time that the quap was near me. . . .

And my mind was pervaded too by a sense of urgency and by the fear that we should be discovered and our proceedings stopped. I wanted to get out to sea again—to be beating up northward with our plunder. I was afraid our masts showed to seaward and might betray us to some passer on the high sea. And one evening near the end I saw a canoe with three natives far off down the lake; I got field-glasses from the captain and scrutinised them, and I could see them staring at us. One man might have been a half-breed and was dressed in white. They watched us for some time very quietly and then paddled off into some channel in the forest shadows.

And for three nights running, so that it took a painful grip upon my inflamed imagination, I dreamt of my uncle's face, only that it was ghostly white like a clown's and the throat was cut from ear to ear—a long ochreous cut. "Too late," he said; "too late! . . ."

§ 6

A day or so after we had got to work upon the quap I found myself so sleepless and miserable that the ship became unendurable. Just before the rush of sunrise, I borrowed Pollack's gun, walked down the planks, clambered over the quap heaps and prowled along the beach. I went perhaps a mile and a half that day and some distance beyond the ruins of the old station, I became interested in the desolation about me, and found when I returned that I was able to sleep for nearly an hour. It was delightful to have been alone for so long—no captain, no Pollack, no one. Accordingly I repeated this expedition the next morning and the next until it became a custom with me. There was little for me to do once the digging and wheeling was organised and so these prowlings of mine grew longer and longer, and presently I began to take food with me.

I pushed these walks far beyond the area desolated by the quap. On the edges of that was first a zone of stunted vegetation, then a sort of swampy jungle that was difficult to penetrate and then the beginnings of the forest, a scene of huge tree stems

and tangled creeper ropes and roots mingled with oozy mud. Here I used to loaf in a state between botanising and reverie—always very anxious to know what was up above in the sunlight—and here it was I murdered a man.

It was the most unmeaning and purposeless murder imaginable. Even as I write down its well-remembered particulars there comes again the sense of its strangeness, its pointlessness, its incompatibility with any of the neat and definite theories people hold about life and the meaning of the world. I did this thing and I want to tell of my doing it, but why I did it and particularly why I should be held responsible for it I cannot explain.

That morning I had come upon a track in the forest and it had occurred to me as a disagreeable idea that this was a human pathway. I didn't want to come upon any human beings. The less our expedition saw of the African population the better for its prospects. Thus far we had been singularly free from native pestering. So I turned back and was making my way over mud and roots and dead fronds and petals scattered from the green world above when abruptly I saw my victim.

I became aware of him perhaps forty feet off standing quite still and regarding me.

He wasn't by any means a pretty figure. He was very black and naked except for a dirty loin-cloth, his legs were ill-shaped and his toes spread wide and the upper edge of his cloth and a girdle of string cut his clumsy abdomen into folds. His forehead was low, his nose very flat and his lower lip swollen and purplish red. His hair was short and fuzzy, and about his neck was a string and a little purse of skin. He carried a musket, and a powder-flask was stuck in his girdle. It was a curious confrontation. There opposed to him stood I, a little soiled perhaps, but still a rather elaborately civilised human being, born, bred and trained in a vague tradition. In my hand was an unaccustomed gun. And each of us was essentially a teeming vivid brain, tensely excited by the encounter, quite unaware of the other's mental content or what to do with him.

He stepped back a pace or so. Stumbled and turned to run.

"Stop," I cried; "stop, you fool!" and started to run after him shouting such things in English. But I was no match for him over the roots and mud.

I had a preposterous idea. "He mustn't get away and tell them!"

And with that instantly I brought both feet together, raised my gun, aimed quite coolly, drew the trigger carefully and shot him neatly in the back.

I saw, and saw with a leap of pure exultation, the smash of my bullet between his shoulder-blades. "Got him," said I, dropping my gun, and down he flopped and died without a groan. "By Jove," I cried with a note of surprise, "I've killed him." I looked about me and then went forward cautiously in a mood between curiosity and astonishment to look at this man whose soul I had flung so unceremoniously out of our common world. I went to him not as one goes to something one has made or done, but as one approaches something found.

He was frightfully smashed out in front: he must have died in the instant. I stooped and raised him by his shoulder and realised that. I dropped him, and stood about and peered about me through the trees. "My word!" I said. He was the second dead human being—apart I mean from surgical properties and mummies and common shows of that sort—that I had ever seen. I stood over him wondering, wondering beyond measure.

A practical idea came into that confusion. Had any one heard the gun?

I reloaded.

After a time I felt securer, and gave my mind again to the dead I had killed. What must I do?

It occurred to me that perhaps I ought to bury him. At any rate, I ought to hide him. I reflected coolly, and then put my gun within easy reach and dragged him by the arm towards a place where the mud seemed soft, and thrust him in. His powder-flask slipped from his loin-cloth, and I went back to get it. Then I pressed him down with the butt of my rifle.

Afterwards, this all seemed to me most horrible, but at the time it was entirely a matter-of-fact transaction. I looked round for any other visible evidence of his fate, looked round as one does when one packs one's portmanteau in a hotel bedroom.

Then I got my bearings, and carefully returned towards the ship. I had the mood of grave concentration of a boy who has lapsed into poaching. And the business only began to assume proper proportions for me as I got near the ship, to seem any other kind of thing than the killing of a bird or rabbit.

In the night, however, it took on enormous and portentous forms. "By God!" I cried suddenly, starting wide awake; "but it was murder!"

I lay after that wide awake, staring at my memories. In some

odd way these visions mixed up with my dream of my uncle in his despair. The black body which I saw now damaged and partly buried, but which, nevertheless, I no longer felt was dead but acutely alive and perceiving, I mixed up with the ochreous slash under my uncle's face. I tried to dismiss this horrible obsession from my mind, but it prevailed over all my efforts.

The next day was utterly black with my sense of that ugly creature's body. I am the least superstitious of men, but it drew me. It drew me back into those thickets to the very place where I had hidden him.

Some evil and detestable beast had been at him, and he lay disinterred.

Methodically I buried his swollen and mangled carcass again, and returned to the ship for another night of dreams. Next day for all the morning I resisted the impulse to go to him, and played Nap with Pollack with my secret gnawing at me, and in the evening started to go and was near benighted. I never told a soul of them of this thing I had done.

Next day I went early and he had gone, and there were human footmarks and ugly stains round the muddy hole from which he had been dragged.

I returned to the ship, disconcerted and perplexed. That day it was the men came aft, with blistered hands and faces and sullen eyes. When they proclaimed, through Edwards, their spokesman, "We've had enough of this, and we mean it," I answered very readily, "So have I. Let's go."

§ 7

We were none too soon. People had been reconnoitring us, the telegraph had been at work, and we were not four hours at sea before we ran against the gunboat that had been sent down the coast to look for us and that would have caught us behind the island like a beast in a trap. It was a night of driving cloud that gave intermittent gleams of moonlight, the wind and sea were strong and we were rolling along through a drift of rain and mist. Suddenly the world was white with moonshine. The gunboat came out as a long dark shape wallowing on the water to the east. She sighted the *Maud Mary* at once, and fired some sort of popgun to arrest us.

The mate turned to me.

"Shall I tell the captain?"

"The captain be damned!" said I, and we let him sleep through two hours of chase till a rain-storm swallowed us up.

Then we changed our course and sailed right across them, and by morning only her smoke was showing.

We were clear of Africa—and with the booty aboard. I did not see what stood between us and home.

For the first time since I had fallen sick in the Thames my spirits rose. I was sea-sick and physically disgusted of course, but I felt kindly in spite of my qualms. So far as I could calculate then the situation was saved. I saw myself returning triumphantly into the Thames, and nothing on earth to prevent old Capern's Perfect Filament going on the market in a fortnight. I had the monopoly of electric lamps beneath my feet.

I was released from the spell of that blood-stained black body all mixed up with grey-black mud. I was going back to baths and decent food and aeronautics and Beatrice. I was going back to Beatrice and my real life again—out of this well into which I had fallen. It would have needed something more than sea-sickness and quap fever to prevent my spirits rising.

I told the captain that I agreed with him that the British were the scum of Europe, the westward drift of all the people, a disgusting rabble, and I lost three pounds by attenuated retail to Pollack at ha'penny nap and euchre.

And then you know, as we got out into the Atlantic this side of Cape Verde, the ship began to go to pieces. I don't pretend for one moment to understand what happened. But I think Greiffenhagen's recent work on the effects of radium upon ligneous tissue does rather carry out my idea that emanations from quap have a rapid rotting effect upon woody fibre.

From the first there had been a different feel about the ship, and as the big winds and waves began to strain her she commenced leaking. Soon she was leaking—not at any particular point, but everywhere. She did not spring a leak, I mean, but water came in first of all near the decaying edges of her planks, and then through them.

I firmly believe the water came through the wood. First it began to ooze, then to trickle. It was like trying to carry moist sugar in a thin paper bag. Soon we were taking in water as though we had opened a door in her bottom.

Once it began, the thing went ahead beyond all fighting. For a day or so we did our best, and I can still remember in my limbs and back the pumping—the fatigue in my arms and the memory of a clear little dribble of water that jerked as one pumped, and of knocking off and of being awakened to go on again, and of fatigue piling up upon fatigue. At last we ceased to think of anything but pumping; one became a

thing of torment, enchanted, doomed to pump for ever. I still remember it as pure relief when at last Pollack came to me pipe in mouth.

"The captain says the damned thing's going down right now," he remarked, chewing his mouthpiece. "Eh?"

"Good idea!" I said. "One can't go on pumping for ever."

And without hurry or alacrity, sullenly and wearily we got into the boats and pulled away from the *Maud Mary* until we were clear of her, and then we stayed resting on our oars, motionless upon a glassy sea, waiting for her to sink. We were all silent, even the captain was silent until she went down. And then he spoke quite mildly in an undertone.

"Dat is the first ship I haf ever lost. . . . And it wass not a fair game! It wass not a cargo any man should take. No!"

I stared at the slow eddies that circled above the departed *Maud Mary*, and the last chance of Business Organisations. I felt weary beyond emotion. I thought of my heroics to Beatrice and my uncle, of my prompt "I'll go," and of all the ineffectual months I had spent after this headlong decision. I was moved to laughter at myself and fate.

But the captain and the men did not laugh. The men scowled at me and rubbed their sore and blistered hands, and set themselves to row. . . .

As all the world knows, we were picked up by the Union Castle liner, *Portland Castle*.

The hairdresser aboard was a wonderful man, and he even improvised me a dress suit, and produced a clean shirt and warm underclothing. I had a hot bath, and dressed and dined and drank a bottle of Burgundy.

"Now," I said, "are there any newspapers? I want to know what's been happening in the world."

My steward gave me what he had, but I landed at Plymouth still largely ignorant of the course of events. I shook off Pollack, and left the captain and mate in a hotel, and the men in a Sailor's Home until I could send to pay them off, and I made my way to the station.

The newspapers I bought, the placards I saw, all England indeed resounded to my uncle's bankruptcy.

BOOK THE FOURTH: THE AFTERMATH OF TONO-BUNGAY

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE STICK OF THE ROCKET

§ 1

That evening I talked with my uncle in the Hardingham for the last time. The atmosphere of the place had altered quite shockingly. Instead of the crowd of importunate courtiers there were just half a dozen uninviting men, journalists waiting for an interview. Ropper the big commissionaire was still there, but now indeed he was defending my uncle from something more than time-wasting intrusions. I found the little man alone in the inner office pretending to work, but really brooding. He was looking yellow and deflated.

"Lord!" he said at the sight of me. "You're lean, George. It makes that scar of yours show up."

We regarded each other gravely for a time.

"Quap," I said, "is at the bottom of the Atlantic. There's some bills—— We've got to pay the men. . . ."

"Seen the papers?"

"Read 'em all in the train."

"At bay," he said. "I been at bay for a week. . . . Yelping round me. . . . And me facing the music. I'm feelin' a bit tired."

He blew and wiped his glasses.

"My stomach isn't what it was," he explained. "One finds it—these times. How did it all happen, George?"

I told him concisely. He nodded to the paragraphs of my narrative and at the end he poured something from a medicine bottle into a sticky little wineglass and drank it. I became aware of the presence of drugs, of three or four small bottles before him among his disorder of papers, of a faint elusively familiar odour in the room.

"Yes," he said, wiping his lips and recorking the bottle. "You've done your best, George. The luck's been against us."

He reflected, bottle in hand. "Sometimes the luck goes

with you and sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes it doesn't. And then where are you ? Grass in the oven ! Fight or no fight."

He asked a few questions and then his thoughts came back to his own urgent affairs. I tried to get some comprehensive account of the situation from him but he would not give it.

"Oh, I wish I'd had you. I wish I'd had you, George. I've had a lot on my hands. You're clear-headed at times."

"What has happened ? "

"Oh ! Boom !—infernal things."

"Yes, but—how ? I'm just off the sea, remember."

"It'd worry me too much to tell you now. It's tied up in a skein."

He muttered something to himself and mused darkly, and roused himself to say—

"Besides—you'd better keep out of it. It's getting tight. Get 'em talking. Go down to Crest Hill and fly. That's *your* affair."

For a time his manner set free queer anxieties in my brain again. I will confess that that Mordet Island nightmare of mine returned, and as I looked at him his hand went out for the drug again. "Stomach, George," he said.

"I been fightin' on that. Every man fights on something—gives way somewhere—head, heart, liver—something. Zzzz. Gives way somewhere. Napoleon did at last. All through the Waterloo campaign, his stomach—it wasn't a stomach ! Worse than mine, no end."

The mood of depression passed as the drug worked within him. His eyes brightened. He began to talk big. He began to dress up the situation for my eyes, to recover what he had admitted to me. He put it as a retreat from Russia. There were still the chances of Leipzig.

"It's a battle, George—a big fight. We're fighting for millions. I've still chances. There's still a card or so. I can't tell all my plans—like speaking on the stroke."

"You might," I began.

"I can't, George. It's like asking to look at some embryo. You got to wait. I know. In a sort of way, I know. But to tell it—— No ! You been away so long. And everything's got complicated."

My perception of disastrous entanglements deepened with the rise of his spirits. It was evident that I could only help to tie him up in whatever net was weaving round his mind by forcing questions and explanations upon him. My thoughts flew off at another angle. "How's Aunt Susan ? " said I.

I had to repeat the question. His busy whispering lips stopped for a moment, and he answered in the note of one who repeats a formula.

"She'd like to be in the battle with me. She'd like to be here in London. But there's corners I got to turn alone." His eye rested for a moment on the little bottle beside him. "And things have happened.

"You might go down now and talk to her," he said, in a directed voice. "I shall be down to-morrow night, I think."

He looked up as though he hoped that would end our talk.

"For the week-end?" I asked.

"For the week-end. Thank God for week-ends, George!"

§ 2

My return home to Lady Grove was a very different thing from what I had anticipated when I had got out to sea with my load of quap and I fancied the Perfect Filament was safe within my grasp. As I walked through the evening light along the Downs, the summer stillness seemed like the stillness of something newly dead. There were no lurking workmen any more, no cyclists on the high road.

Cessation was manifest everywhere. There had been, I learnt from my aunt, a touching and quite voluntary demonstration when the Crest Hill work had come to an end and the men had drawn their last pay; they had cheered my uncle and hooted the contractors and Lord Boom.

I cannot now recall the manner in which my aunt and I greeted one another. I must have been very tired then, but whatever impression was made has gone out of my memory. But I recall very clearly how we sat at the little round table near the big window that gave on the terrace, and dined and talked. I remember her talking of my uncle.

She asked after him, and whether he seemed well. "I wish I could help," she said. "But I've never helped him much, never. His way of doing things was never mine. And since—since—— Since he began to get so rich, he's kept things from me. In the old days—it was different. . . .

"There he is—I don't know what he's doing. He won't have me near him. . . .

"More's kept from me than any one. The very servants won't let me know. They try and stop the worst of the papers—Boom's things—from coming upstairs. . . . I suppose they've got him in a corner, George.

"Poor old Teddy! Poor old Adam and Eve we are! Ficial Receivers with flaming swords to drive us out of our garden! I'd hoped we'd never have another Trek. Well—anyway, it won't be Crest Hill. . . . But it's hard on Teddy. He must be in such a mess up there. Poor old chap. I suppose we can't help him. I suppose we'd only worry him. Have some more soup, George—while there is some? . . ."

The next day was one of those days of strong perception that stand out clear in one's memory when the common course of days is blurred. I can recall now the awakening in the large familiar room that was always kept for me, and how I lay staring at its chintz-covered chairs, its spaced fine furniture, its glimpse of the cedars without, and thought that all this had to end.

I have never been greedy for money, I have never wanted to be rich, but I felt now an immense sense of impending deprivation. I read the newspapers after breakfast—I and my aunt together—and then I walked up to see what Cothope had done in the matter of Lord Roberts *β*. Never before had I appreciated so acutely the ample brightness of the Lady Grove gardens, the dignity and wide peace of all about me. It was one of those warm mornings in late May that have won all the glory of summer without losing the gay delicacy of spring. The shrubbery was bright with laburnum and lilac, the beds swarmed with daffodils and narcissi and with lilies of the valley in the shade.

I went along the well-kept paths among the rhododendra and through the private gate into the woods where the blue-bells and common orchid were in profusion. Never before had I tasted so completely the fine sense of privilege and ownership. And all this has to end, I told myself, all this has to end.

Neither my uncle nor I had made any provision for disaster, all we had was in the game, and I had little doubt now of the completeness of our ruin. For the first time in my life since he had sent me that wonderful telegram of his I had to consider that common anxiety of mankind—Employment. I had to come off my magic carpet and walk once more in the world.

And suddenly I found myself at the cross-drives where I had seen Beatrice for the first time after so many years. It is strange, but so far as I can recollect I had not thought of her once since I had landed at Plymouth. No doubt she had filled the background of my mind, but I do not remember one definite clear thought. I had been intent on my uncle and the financial collapse.

It came like a blow in the face now, all that too has to end!

Suddenly I was filled with the thought of her and a great

longing for her. What would she do when she realised our immense disaster? What would she do? How would she take it. It filled me with astonishment to realise how little I could tell. . . .

Should I perhaps presently happen upon her?

I went on through the plantations and out upon the Downs and thence I saw Cothope with a new glider of his own design soaring down wind to my old familiar "grounding" place. To judge by its long rhythm it was a very good glider. "Like Cothope's cheek," thought I, "to go on with the research. I wonder if he's keeping notes. . . . But all this will have to stop."

He was sincerely glad to see me. "It's been a rum go," he said.

He had been there without wages for a month, a man forgotten in the rush of events.

"I just stuck on and did what I could with the stuff. I got a bit of money of my own—and I said to myself, 'Well, here you are with the gear and no one to look after you. You won't get such a chance again, my boy, not in all your born days. Why not make what you can with it?'"

"How's Lord Roberts β?"

Cothope lifted his eyebrows. "I've had to refrain," he said. "But he's looking very handsome."

"Gods!" I said, "I'd like to get him up just once before we smash. You read the papers? You know we're going to smash?"

"Oh! I read the papers. It's scandalous, Sir, such work as ours should depend on things like that. You and I ought to be under the State, Sir, if you'll excuse me——"

"Nothing to excuse," I said. "I've always been a Socialist—in theory. Let's go and have a look at him. How is he? Deflated?"

"Just about quarter full. That last oil glaze of yours holds the gas something beautiful. He's not lost a cubic metre a week. . . ."

Cothope returned to Socialism as we went towards the sheds.

"Glad to think you're a Socialist, Sir," he said, "it's the only civilised state. I been a Socialist some years—off the *Clarion*. It's a rotten scramble, this world. It takes the things we make and invent and it plays the silly fool with 'em. We scientific people, we'll have to take things over and stop all this financing and advertisement and that. It's too silly. It's a noosance. Look at us!"

Lord Roberts β even in his partially deflated condition in

his shed was a fine thing to stare up at. I stood side by side with Cothope regarding him, and it was borne in upon me more acutely than ever that all this had to end. I had a feeling, just like the feeling of a boy who wants to do wrong, that I would use up the stuff while I had it before the creditors descended. I had a queer fancy, too, I remember, that if I could get into the air it would advertise my return to Beatrice.

"We'll fill her," I said concisely.

"It's all ready," said Cothope, and added as an afterthoughe, "unless they cut off the gas. . . ."

I worked and interested myself with Cothope all the morning and for a time forgot my other troubles. But the thought of Beatrice flooded me slowly and steadily. It became an unintelligent sick longing to see her. I felt that I could not wait for the filling of Lord Roberts β, that I must hunt her up and see her soon. I got everything forward and lunched with Cothope, and then with the feeblest excuses left him in order to prowl down through the woods towards Bedley Corner. I became a prey to wretched hesitations and diffidence. Ought I to go near her now ? I asked myself, reviewing all the social abasements of my early years. At last about five I called at the dower-house. I was greeted by their Charlotte—with a forbidding eye and a cold astonishment.

Both Beatrice and Lady Osprey were out.

There came into my head some prowling dream of metting her. I went along the lane towards Woking, the lane down which we had walked five months ago in the wind and rain.

I mooned for a time in our former footsteps, then swore and turned back across the fields, and then conceived a distaste for Cothope and went Downward. At last I found myself looking down on the huge abandoned masses of the Crest Hill house.

That gave my mind a twist into a new channel. My uncle came uppermost again. What a strange melancholy emptiness of intention that stricken enterprise seemed in the even evening sunlight, what vulgar magnificence and crudity and utter absurdity ! It was as idiotic as the pyramids. I sat down on the stile, staring at it as though I had never seen that forest of scaffold-poles, that waste of walls and bricks and plaster and shaped stones, that wilderness of broken soil and wheeling tracks and dumps before. It struck me suddenly as the compactest image and sample of all that passes for Progress, of all the advertisement-inflated spending, the aimless building up and pulling down, the enterprise and promise of my age. This was our fruit, this was what we had done, I and my uncle, in the

fashion of our time. We were its leaders and exponents, we were the thing it most flourishingly produced. For this futility in its end, for an epoch of such futility, the solemn scroll of history had unfolded. . . .

"Great God!" I cried, "but is this Life?"

For this the armies drilled, for this the Law was administered and the prisons did their duty, for this the millions toiled and perished in suffering, in order that a few of us should build palaces we never finished, make billiard-rooms under ponds, run imbecile walls round irrational estates, scorch about the world in motor-cars, devise flying-machines, play golf and a dozen such foolish games of ball, crowd into chattering dinner-parties, gamble and make our lives one vast dismal spectacle of witless waste! So it struck me then, and for a time I could think of no other interpretation. This was Life! It came to me like a revelation, a revelation at once incredible and indisputable of the abysmal folly of our being.

§ 3

I was roused from such thoughts by the sound of footsteps behind me.

I turned half hopeful—so foolish is a lover's imagination—and stopped amazed. It was my uncle. His face was white—white as I had seen it in my dream.

"Hullo!" I said and stared. "Why aren't you in London?"

"It's all up," he said. . . .

"Adjudicated? . . ."

"No! . . ."

I stared at him for a moment and then got off the stile.

He stood swaying and then came forward with a weak motion of his arms like a man who cannot see distinctly, and caught at and leant upon the stile. For a moment we were absolutely still. He made a clumsy gesture towards the great futility below and choked. I discovered that his face was wet with tears, that his wet glasses blinded him. He put up his little fat hand and clawed them off clumsily, felt inefficiently for his pocket-handkerchief and then to my horror, as he clung to me, he began to weep aloud, this little old world-worn swindler. It wasn't just sobbing or shedding tears, it was crying as a child cries. It was—oh! terrible!

"It's cruel," he blubbered at last. "They asked me questions. They *kep*' asking me questions, George. . . ."

He sought for utterance, and spluttered.

"The Bloody bullies!" he shouted. "The Blöö-öödy Bullies."

He ceased to weep. He became suddenly rapid and explanatory.

"It's not a fair game, George. They tire you out. And I'm not well. My stomach's all wrong. And I been and got a cold. I always been li'ble to cold and this one's on my chest. And then they tell you to speak up. They bait you—and bait you, and bait you. It's torture. The strain of it. You can't remember what you said. You're bound to contradict yourself. It's like Russia, George. . . . It isn't fair play. . . . Prominent man. I've been next at dinners with that chap Neal, I've told him stories—and he's bitter! Sets out to ruin me. Don't ask a civil question—bellows."

He broke down again. "I been bellowed at, I been bullied, I been treated like a dog. Dirty cads they are! Dirty cads! I'd rather be a Three Card Sharper than a barrister; I'd rather sell cat's meat in the streets.

"They sprung things on me this morning, things I didn't expect. They rushed me! I'd got it all in my hands and then I was jumped. By Neal. Neal I've given city tips to! Neal! I've helped Neal. . . .

"I couldn't swallow a mouthful—not in the lunch hour. I couldn't face it. It's true, George—I couldn't face it. I said I'd get a bit of air and slipped out and down to the Embankment, and there I took a boat to Richmond. Some idee. I took a rowing-boat when I got there and rowed about on the river for a bit. A lot of chaps and girls there was on the bank laughed at my shirt-sleeves and top hat. Dessay they thought it was a pleasure trip. Fat lot of pleasure! I rowed round for a bit and came in. Then I came on here. Windsor way. And there they are in London doing what they like with me. . . . I don't care!"

"But——" I said, looking down at him perplexed.

"It's abscondin'. They'll have a warrant."

"I don't understand," I said.

"It's all up, George—all up and over.

"And I thought I'd live in that place, George—and die a lord! It's a great place, reely, an imperial place—if any one has the sense to buy it and finish it. That terrace——"

I stood thinking him over.

"Look here!" I said. "What's that about a warrant? Are you sure they'll get a warrant? I'm sorry, uncle, but what have you done?"

"Haven't I told you?"

"Yes, but they won't do very much to you for that. They'll only bring you up for the rest of your examination."

He remained silent for a time. At last he spoke—speaking with difficulty.

"It's worse than that. I done something. . . . They're bound to get it out. Practically they *have* got it out."

"What?"

"Writin' things down—— I done something."

For the first time in his life, I believe, he felt and looked ashamed. It filled me with remorse to see him suffer so.

"We've all done things," I said. "It's part of the game the world makes us play. If they want to arrest you—and you've got no cards in your hand——! They mustn't arrest you."

"No. That's partly why I went to Richmond. But I never thought——"

His little bloodshot eyes stared at Crest Hill.

"That chap Whittaker Wright," he said, "he'd got his stuff ready. I haven't. Now you got it, George. That's the sort of hole I'm in."

§ 4

That memory of my uncle at the gate is very clear and full. I am able to recall even the undertow of my thoughts while he was speaking. I remember my pity and affection for him in his misery growing and stirring within me, my realisation that at any risk I must help him. But then comes indistinctness again. I was beginning to act. I know I persuaded him to put himself in my hands, and began at once to plan and do. I think that when we act most we remember least, that just in the measure that the impulse of our impressions translates itself into schemes and movements, it ceases to record itself in memories. I know I resolved to get him away at once, and to use the Lord Roberts β in effecting that. It was clear he was soon to be a hunted man, and it seemed to me already unsafe for him to try the ordinary Continental routes in his flight. I had to evolve some scheme, and evolve it rapidly, how we might drop most inconspicuously into the world across the water. My resolve to have one flight at least in my airship fitted with this like hand to glove. It seemed to me we might be able to cross over the water in the night, set our airship adrift, and turn up as pedestrian tourists in Normandy or Brittany, and so get away. That, at any rate, was my ruling idea. I sent off Cothope with a dummy note to

Woking because I did not want to implicate him, and took my uncle to the pavilion. I went down to my aunt, and made a clean breast of the situation. She became admirably competent. We went into his dressing-room, and ruthlessly broke his locks. I got a pair of brown boots, a tweed suit and cap of his, and indeed a plausible walking outfit, and a little game-bag for his pedestrian gear; and, in addition, a big motoring overcoat and a supply of rugs to add to those I had at the pavilion. I also got a flask of brandy, and she made sandwiches. I don't remember any servants appearing, and I forget where she got those sandwiches. Meanwhile we talked. Afterwards I thought with what a sure confidence we talked to each other.

"What's he done?" she said.

"D' you mind knowing?"

"No conscience left, thank God!"

"I think—forgery!"

There was just a little pause. "Can you carry this bundle?" she asked.

I lifted it.

"No woman ever has respected the law—ever," she said. "It's too silly. . . . The things it lets you do! And then pulls you up. Like a mad nurse minding a child."

She carried some rugs for me through the shrubbery in the darkling.

"They'll think we're going mooning," she said, jerking her head at the household. "I wonder what they make of us—criminals. . . ." An immense droning note came as if in answer to that. It startled us both for a moment. "The dears!" she said. "It's the gong for dinner! . . . But I wish I could help little Teddy, George. It's awful to think of him there with hot eyes, red and dry. And I know—the sight of me makes him feel sore. Things I said, George. If I could have seen, I'd have let him have an omnibusful of Scrymgeours. I cut him up. He'd never thought I meant it before. . . . I'll help all I can, anyhow."

I turned at something in her voice, and got a moonlight gleam of tears upon her face.

"Could *she* have helped?" she asked abruptly.

"*She?*"

"That woman."

"My God!" I cried, "*helped!* Those—things don't help! . . ."

"Tell me again what I ought to do," she said after a silence.

I went over the plans I had made for communicating, and the

things I thought she might do. I had given her the address of a solicitor she might put some trust in.

"But you must act for yourself," I insisted. "Roughly," I said, "it's a scramble. You must get what you can for us, and follow as you can."

She nodded.

She came right up to the pavilion and hovered for a time shyly, and then went away.

I found my uncle in my sitting-room in an arm-chair, with his feet upon the fender of the gas-stove, which he had lit, and now he was feebly drunken with my whiskey, and very weary in body and spirit, and inclined to be cowardly.

"I lef' my drops," he said.

He changed his clothes slowly and unwillingly. I had to bully him, I had almost to shove him to the airship and tuck him up upon its wicker flat. Single-handed I made but a clumsy start; we scraped along the roof of the shed and bent a van of the propeller, and for a time I hung underneath without his offering a hand to help me to scramble up. If it hadn't been for a sort of anchoring trolley device of Cothope's, a sort of slip anchor running on a rail, we should never have got clear at all.

§ 5

The incidents of our flight in Lord Roberts β do not arrange themselves in any consecutive order. To think of that adventure is like dipping haphazard into an album of views. One is reminded first by this, and then by that. We were both lying down on a horizontal plate of basketwork; for Lord Roberts β had none of the elegant accommodation of a balloon. I lay forward, and my uncle behind me in such a position that he could see hardly anything of our flight. We were protected from rolling over simply by netting between the steel stays. It was impossible for us to stand up at all; we had either to lie or crawl on all fours over the basketwork. Amidships were lockers made of Watson's Aulite material, and between these it was that I had put my uncle, wrapped in rugs. I wore sealskin motoring boots and gloves, and a motoring fur coat over my tweeds, and I controlled the engine by Bowden wires and levers forward.

The early part of that night's experience was made up of warmth, of moonlit Surrey and Sussex landscape, and of a rapid and successful flight, ascending and swooping, and then ascending again southward. I could not watch the clouds because the airship overhung me; I could not see the stars nor gauge the

meteorological happenings, but it was fairly clear to me that a wind, shifting between north and north-east, was gathering strength, and after I had satisfied myself by a series of entirely successful expansions and contractions of the real air-worthiness of Lord Roberts *β*, I stopped the engine to save my petrol, and let the monster drift, checking its progress by the dim landscape below. My uncle lay quite still behind me, saying little and staring in front of him, and I was left to my own thoughts and sensations.

My thoughts, whatever they were, have long since faded out of memory, and my sensations have merged into one continuous memory of a countryside lying, as it seemed, under snow, with square patches of dimness, white phantoms of roads, rents and pools of velvety blackness, and lamp-jewelled houses. I remember a train boring its way like a hastening caterpillar of fire across the landscape, and how distinctly I heard its clatter. Every town and street was buttoned with street lamps. I came quite close to the South Downs near Lewes, and all the lights were out in the houses, and the people gone to bed. We left the land a little to the east of Brighton, and by that time Brighton was well abed, and the brightly lit sea-front deserted. Then I let out the gas-chamber to its fullest extent and rose. I like to be high above water.

I do not clearly know what happened in the night. I think I must have dozed, and probably my uncle slept. I remember that once or twice I heard him talking in an eager, muffled voice to himself, or to an imaginary court. But there can be no doubt the wind changed right round into the east, and that we were carried far down the Channel without any suspicion of the immense leeway we were making. I remember the kind of stupid perplexity with which I saw the dawn breaking over a grey waste of waters below, and realised that something was wrong. I was so stupid that it was only after the sunrise I really noticed the trend of the foam-caps below, and perceived we were in a severe easterly gale. Even then instead of heading south-easterly, I set the engine going, headed south, and so continued a course that must needs have either just hit Ushant, or carry us over the Bay of Biscay. I thought I was east of Cherbourg, when I was far to the west, and stopped my engine in that belief, and then set it going again. I did actually sight the coast of Brittany to the south-east in the late afternoon, and that it was woke me up to the gravity of our position. I discovered it by accident in the south-east, when I was looking for it in the south-west. I turned about east and fought the wind

for some time, and finding I had no chance in its teeth, went high, where it seemed less violent, and tried to make a course south-east. It was only then that I realised what a gale I was in. I had been going westward, and perhaps even in gusts north of west, at a pace of fifty or sixty miles an hour.

Then I began what I supposed would be called a Fight against the east wind. One calls it a Fight, but it was really almost as unlike a fight as plain sewing. The wind tried to drive me westwardly, and I tried to get as much as I could eastwardly, with the wind beating and rocking us irregularly, but by no means unbearably, for about twelve hours. My hope lay in the wind abating and our keeping in the air, and eastward of Finistère until it did, and the chief danger was the exhaustion of our petrol. It was a long and anxious and almost meditative time; we were fairly warm, and only slowly getting hungry, and except that my uncle grumbled a little and produced some philosophical reflections, and began to fuss about having a temperature, we talked very little. I was tired and sulky, and chiefly worried about the engine. I had to resist a tendency to crawl back and look at it. I did not care to risk contracting our gas-chamber for fear of losing gas. Nothing was less like a fight. I know that in popular magazines and so forth, all such occasions as this are depicted in terms of hysteria. Captains save their ships, engineers complete their bridges, generals conduct their battles, in a state of dancing excitement, foaming recondite technicalities at the lips. I suppose that sort of thing works up the reader, but so far as it professes to represent reality, I am convinced it is all childish nonsense. School-boys of fifteen, girls of eighteen, and literary men all their lives, may have these squealing fits, but my own experience is that most exciting scenes are not exciting, and most of the urgent things in life are done by steady-headed men.

Neither I nor my uncle spent the night in ejaculations, nor in humorous allusions, nor any of these things. We remained lumpish. My uncle stuck in his place and grumbled about his stomach, and occasionally rambled off into expositions of his financial position and denunciations of Neal—he certainly struck out one or two good phrases for Neal—and I crawled about at rare intervals in a vague sort of way and grunted, and our basket-work creaked continually, and the wind on our quarter made a sort of ruffled flapping in the wall of the gas-chamber.

I must have dozed, and it was still dark when I realised with a start that we were nearly due south of, and a long way from, a regularly flashing lighthouse, standing out before the glow of

some great town, and then that the thing that had awakened me was the cessation of our engine, and that we were driving back to the west.

Then, indeed, for a time I felt the grim thrill of life. I crawled forward to the cords of the release-valves, made my uncle crawl forward too, and let out the gas until we were falling down through the air like a clumsy glider towards the vague greyness that was land.

Something must have intervened here that I have forgotten. I saw the lights of Bordeaux when it was quite dark, a nebulous haze against black; of that I am reasonably sure. But certainly our fall took place in the cold, uncertain light of early dawn. I am, at least, equally sure of that. And Mimizan, near where we dropped, is fifty miles from Bordeaux, whose harbour lights I must have seen.

I remember coming down at last with a curious indifference, and actually rousing myself to steer. But the actual coming to earth was exciting enough. I remember our prolonged dragging landfall, and the difficulty I had to get clear, and how a gust of wind caught Lord Roberts *β* as my uncle stumbled away from the ropes and litter, and dropped me heavily, and threw me on to my knees. Then came the realisation that the monster was almost consciously disentangling itself for escape, and then the light leap of its rebound. The rope slipped out of reach of my hand. I remember running knee-deep in a salt pool in hopeless pursuit of the airship as it dragged and rose seaward, and how only after it had escaped my uttermost effort to recapture it did I realise that this was quite the best thing that could have happened. It drove swiftly over the sandy dunes, lifting and falling, and was hidden by a clump of wind-bitten trees. Then it reappeared much further off, and still receding. It soared for a time, and sank slowly, and after that I saw it no more. I suppose it fell into the sea and got wetted with salt water and heavy, and so became deflated and sank.

It was never found, and there was never a report of any one seeing it after it escaped from me.

§ 6

But if I find it hard to tell the story of our long flight through the air overseas, at least that dawn in France stands cold and clear and full. I see again almost as if I saw once more with my bodily eyes the ridges of sand rising behind ridges of sand, grey and cold and black-browed with an insufficient grass. I

feel again the clear, cold chill of dawn, and hear the distant barking of a dog. I find myself asking again, "What shall we do now?" and trying to scheme with a brain tired beyond measure.

At first my uncle occupied my attention. He was shivering a good deal, and it was all I could do to resist my desire to get him into a comfortable bed at once. But I wanted to appear plausibly in this part of the world. I felt it would not do to turn up anywhere at dawn and rest, it would be altogether too conspicuous; we must rest until the day was well advanced, and then appear as road-stained pedestrians seeking a meal. I gave him most of what was left of the biscuits, emptied our flasks, and advised him to sleep, but at first it was too cold, albeit I wrapped the big fur rug around him.

I was struck now by the flushed weariness of his face, and the look of age the grey stubble on his unshaved chin gave him. He sat crumpled up, shivering and coughing, munching reluctantly, but drinking eagerly, and whimpering a little, a dreadfully pitiful figure to me. But we had to go through with it, there was no way out for us.

Presently the sun rose over the pines, and the sand grew rapidly warm. My uncle had done eating, and sat with his wrists resting on his knees, the most hopeless-looking of lost souls.

"I'm ill," he said, "I'm damnably ill! I can feel it in my skin!"

Then—it was horrible to me—he cried, "I ought to be in bed; I ought to be in bed . . . instead of flying about," and suddenly he burst into tears.

I stood up. "Go to sleep, man!" I said, and took the rug from him, and spread it out and rolled him up in it.

"It's all very well," he protested; "I'm not young enough——"

"Lift up your head," I interrupted, and put his knapsack under it.

"They'll catch us here, just as much as in an inn," he grumbled, and then lay still.

Presently, after a long time, I perceived he was asleep. His breath came with peculiar wheezings, and every now and again he would cough. I was very stiff and tired myself, and perhaps I dozed. I don't remember. I remember only sitting, as it seemed nigh interminably, beside him, too weary even to think in that sandy desolation.

No one came near us, no creature, not even a dog. I roused myself at last, feeling that it was vain to seek to seem other than

abnormal, and with an effort that was like lifting a sky of lead, we made our way through the wearisome sand to a farm-house. There I feigned even a more insufficient French than I possess naturally, and let it appear that we were pedestrians from Biarritz who had lost our way along the shore and got benighted. This explained us pretty well, I thought, and we got most heartening coffee and a cart to a little roadside station. My uncle grew more and more manifestly ill with every stage of our journey. I got him to Bayonne, where he refused at first to eat, and was afterwards very sick, and then took him shivering and collapsed up a little branch line to a frontier place called Luzon Gare.

We found one homely inn with two small bedrooms, kept by a kindly Basque woman. I got him to bed, and that night shared his room, and after an hour or so of sleep he woke up in a raging fever and with a wandering mind, cursing Neal and repeating long inaccurate lists of figures. He was manifestly a case for a doctor, and in the morning we got one in. He was a young man from Montpellier, just beginning to practise, and very mysterious and technical and modern and unhelpful. He spoke of cold and exposure, and *la grippe* and pneumonia. He gave many explicit and difficult directions. . . . I perceived it devolved upon me to organise nursing and a sick-room. I installed a *Religieuse* in the second bedroom of the inn, and took a room for myself in the inn of Port de Luzon, a quarter of a mile away.

§ 7

And now my story converges on what, in that queer corner of refuge out of the world, was destined to be my uncle's death-bed. There is a background of the Pyrenees, of blue hills and sunlit houses, of the old castle of Luzon and a noisy cascading river, and for a foreground the dim stuffy room whose windows both the *Religieuse* and hostess conspired to shut, with its waxed floor, its four-poster bed, its characteristically French chairs and fireplace, its champagne bottles and dirty basins and used towels and packets of *Somatose* on the table. And in the sickly air of the confined space behind the curtains of the bed lay my little uncle with an effect of being enthroned and secluded, or sat up, or writhed and tossed in his last dealings with life. One went and drew back the edge of the curtains if one wanted to speak to him or look at him.

Usually he was propped up against pillows, because so he breathed more easily. He slept hardly at all.

I have a confused memory of vigils and mornings and after-

noons spent by that bedside, and how the *Religieuse* hovered about me, and how meek and good and inefficient she was, and how horribly black were her nails. Other figures come and go, and particularly the doctor, a young man plumply rococo, in bicycling dress, with fine waxen features, a little pointed beard, and the long black frizzy hair and huge tie of a minor poet. Bright and clear-cut and irrelevant are memories of the Basque hostess of my uncle's inn and of the family of Spanish people who entertained me and prepared the most amazingly elaborate meals for me, with soup and salad and chicken and remarkable sweets. They were all very kind and sympathetic people, systematically so. And constantly, without attracting attention, I was trying to get newspapers from home.

My uncle is central to all these impressions.

I have tried to make you picture him, time after time, as the young man of the Wimblehurst chemist's shop, as the shabby assistant in Tottenham Court Road, as the adventurer of the early days of Tono-Bungay, as the confident preposterous plutocrat. And now I have to tell of him strangely changed under the shadow of oncoming death, with his skin lax and yellow and glistening with sweat, his eyes large and glassy, his countenance unfamiliar through the growth of a beard, his nose pinched and thin. Never had he looked so small as now. And he talked to me in a whispering, strained voice of great issues, of why his life had been, and whither he was going. Poor little man! That last phase is, as it were, disconnected from all the other phases. It was as if he crawled out from the ruins of his career, and looked about him before he died. For he had quite clear-minded states in the intervals of his delirium.

He knew he was almost certainly dying. In a way that took the burthen of his cares off his mind. There was no more Neal to face, no more flights or evasions, no punishments.

"It has been a great career, George," he said, "but I shall be glad to rest. Glad to rest! . . . Glad to rest."

His mind ran rather upon his career, and usually, I am glad to recall, with a note of satisfaction and approval. In his delirious phases he would most often exaggerate this self-satisfaction, and talk of his splendours. He would pluck at the sheet and stare before him, and whisper half-audible fragments of sentences.

"What is this great place, these cloud-capped towers, these airy pinnacles? . . . Ilion. Sky-y-pointing. . . . Ilion House, the residence of one of our great merchant princes. . . . Terrace above terrace. Reaching to the Heavens. . . . King-

doms Cæsar never knew. . . . A great poet, George. Zzzz. Kingdoms Cæsar never knew. . . . Under entirely new management.

"Greatness. . . . Millions. . . . Universities. . . . He stands on the terrace—on the upper terrace—directing—directing—by the globe—directing—the trade. . . ."

It was hard at times to tell when his sane talk ceased and his delirium began. The secret springs of his life, the vain imaginations, were revealed. I sometimes think that all the life of man sprawls abed, careless and unkempt, until it must needs clothe and wash itself and come forth seemly in act and speech for the encounter with one's fellow men. I suspect that all things unspoken in our souls partake somewhat of the laxity of delirium and dementia. Certainly from those slimy tormented lips above the bristling grey beard came nothing but dreams and disconnected fancies. . . .

Sometimes he raved about Neal, threatened Neal. "What has he got invested?" he said. "Does he think he can escape me? . . . If I followed him up. . . . Ruin. Ruin. . . . One would think *I* had taken his money."

And sometimes he reverted to our airship flight. "It's too long, George, too long and too cold. I'm too old a man—too old—for this sort of thing. . . . You know you're not saving—you're killing me."

Towards the end it became evident our identity was discovered. I found the press, and especially Boom's section of it, had made a sort of hue and cry for us, sent special commissioners to hunt for us, and though none of these emissaries reached us until my uncle was dead, one felt the forewash of that storm of energy. The thing got into the popular French press. People became curious in their manner towards us, and a number of fresh faces appeared about the weak little struggle that went on in the closeness behind the curtains of the bed. The young doctor insisted on consultations, and a motor-car came up from Biarritz, and suddenly odd people with questioning eyes began to poke in with inquiries and help. Though nothing was said, I could feel that we were no longer regarded as simple middle-class tourists; about me, as I went, I perceived almost as though it trailed visibly, the prestige of Finance and a criminal notoriety. Local personages of a plump and prosperous quality appeared in the inn making inquiries, the Luzon priest became helpful, people watched our window, and stared at me as I went to and fro; and then we had a raid from a little English clergyman and his amiable, capable wife in severely Anglican black, who swooped

down upon us like virtuous but resolute vultures from the adjacent village of Saint Jean de Pollack.

The clergyman was one of those odd types that gravitate between remote country towns in England and the conduct of English Church services on mutual terms in enterprising hotels abroad, a tremulous, obstinate little being with sporadic hairs upon his face, spectacles, a red button nose, and aged black raiment. He was evidently enormously impressed by my uncle's monetary greatness, and by his own inkling of our identity, and he shone and brimmed over with tact and fussy helpfulness. He was eager to share the watching of the bedside with me, he proffered services with both hands, and as I was now getting into touch with affairs in London again, and trying to disentangle the gigantic details of the smash from the papers I had succeeded in getting from Biarritz, I accepted his offers pretty generously, and began the studies in modern finance that lay before me. I had got so out of touch with the old traditions of religion, that I overlooked the manifest possibility of his attacking my poor sinking vestiges of an uncle with theological solicitudes. My attention was called to that, however, very speedily by a polite but urgent quarrel between himself and the Basque landlady as to the necessity of her hanging a cheap crucifix in the shadow over the bed, where it might catch my uncle's eye, where, indeed, I found it had caught his eye.

"Good Lord!" I cried; "is *that* still going on!"

That night the little clergyman watched, and in the small hours he raised a false alarm that my uncle was dying, and made an extraordinary fuss. He raised the house. I shall never forget that scene, I think, which began with a tapping at my bedroom door just after I had fallen asleep, and his voice—

"If you want to see your uncle before he goes, you must come now."

The stuffy little room was crowded when I reached it, and lit by three flickering candles. I felt I was back in the eighteenth century. There lay my poor uncle amidst indescribably tumbled bedclothes, weary of life beyond measure, weary and rambling, and the little clergyman trying to hold his hand and his attention, and repeating over and over again—

"Mr. Ponderevo, Mr. Ponderevo, it is all right. It is all right. Only Believe! 'Believe on me, and ye shall be saved'!"

Close at hand was the doctor with one of those cruel and idiotic injection needles modern science puts in the hands of these half-educated young men, keeping my uncle flickeringly alive for no reason whatever. The *Religieuse* hovered sleepily

in the background with an overdue and neglected dose. In addition, the landlady had not only got up herself, but roused an aged crone of a mother and a partially imbecile husband, and there was also a fattish, stolid man in grey alpaca and with an air of importance—who he was and how he got there, I don't know. I rather fancy the doctor explained him to me in French I did not understand. And they were all there, wearily nocturnal, hastily and carelessly dressed, intent upon the life that flickered and sank, making a public and curious show of its going, queer shapes of human beings, lit by three uncertain candles, every soul of them keenly and avidly resolved to be in at the death. The doctor stood, the others were all sitting on chairs the landlady had brought in and arranged for them.

And my uncle spoilt the climax, and did not die.

I replaced the little clergyman on the chair by the bedside, and he hovered about the room.

"I think," he whispered to me mysteriously, as he gave place to me, "I believe—it is well with him."

Then I heard him trying to render the stock phrases of Low Church piety into French for the benefit of the stolid man in grey alpaca. Then he knocked a glass off the table, and scrabbled for the fragments. From the first I doubted the theory of an immediate death. I consulted the doctor in urgent whispers. I turned round to get champagne, and nearly fell over the clergyman's legs. He was on his knees at the additional chair the Basque landlady had got on my arrival, and he was praying aloud, "O Heavenly Father, have mercy on this thy Child . . ." I hustled him up and out of the way, and in another minute he was down at another chair praying again, and barring the path of the *Religieuse*, who had found me the corkscrew. Something put into my head that tremendous blasphemy of Carlyle's about "the last mew of a drowning kitten." He found a third chair vacant presently; it was as if he was playing a game.

"Good Heavens," said I, "we must clear these people out," and with a certain urgency I did.

I had a temporary lapse of memory, and forgot all my French. I drove them out mainly by gesture, and opened the window to the universal horror. I intimated the death scene was postponed, and, as a matter of fact, my uncle did not die until the next night.

I did not let the little clergyman come near him again, and I was watchful for any sign that his mind had been troubled. But he made none. He talked once about "that parson chap."

"Didn't bother you?" I asked.

"Wanted something," he said.

I kept silence, listening keenly to his mutterings. I understood him to say, "they wanted too much." His face puckered like a child's going to cry. "You can't *get* a safe six per cent.," he said. I had for a moment a wild suspicion that those urgent talks had not been altogether spiritual, but that, I think, was a quite unworthy and unjust suspicion. The little clergyman was as simple and honest as the day. My uncle was merely generalising about his class.

But it may have been these talks that set loose some long dormant string of ideas in my uncle's brain, ideas the things of this world had long suppressed and hidden altogether. Near the end he suddenly became clear-minded and lucid, albeit very weak, and his voice was little, but clear.

"George," he said.

"I'm here," I said, "close beside you."

"George. You have always been responsible for the science. George. You know better than I do. Is—— Is it proved?"

"What proved?"

"Either way?"

"I don't understand."

"Death ends all. After so much—— Such splendid beginnings. Somewhere. Something."

I stared at him amazed. His sunken eyes were very grave.

"What do you expect?" I said in wonder.

He would not answer. "Aspirations," he whispered.

He fell into a broken monologue, regardless of me. "Trailing clouds of glory," he said, and "first-rate poet, first-rate. . . . George was always hard. Always."

For a long time there was silence.

Then he made a gesture that he wished to speak.

"Seems to me, George——"

I bent my head down, and he tried to lift his hand to my shoulder. I raised him a little on his pillows, and listened.

"It seems to me, George, always—there must be something in me—that won't die."

He looked at me as though the decision rested with me.

"I think," he said; "something——"

Then, for a moment, his mind wandered. "Just a little link," he whispered almost pleadingly, and lay quite still, but presently he was uneasy again.

"Some other world——"

"Perhaps," I said. "Who knows?"

"Some other world."

"Not the same scope for enterprise," I said. "No."

He became silent. I sat leaning down to him and following out my own thoughts, and presently the *Religieuse* resumed her periodic conflict with the window fastening. For a time he struggled for breath. . . . It seemed such nonsense that he should have to suffer so—poor silly little man!

"George," he whispered, and his weak little hand came out. "*Perhaps*——"

He said no more, but I perceived from the expression of his eyes that he thought the question had been put.

"Yes, I think so," I said stoutly.

"Aren't you sure?"

"Oh—practically sure," said I, and I think he tried to squeeze my hand. And there I sat, holding his hand tight, and trying to think what seeds of immortality could be found in all his being, what sort of ghost there was in *him* to wander out into the bleak immensities. Queer fancies came to me. . . . He lay still for a long time, save for a brief struggle or so for breath, and ever and again I wiped his mouth and lips.

I fell into a pit of thought. I did not remark at first the change that was creeping over his face. He lay back on his pillow, made a faint Zzzzing sound that ceased, and presently and quite quietly he died—greatly comforted by my assurance. I do not know when he died. His hand relaxed insensibly. Suddenly, with a start, with a shock, I found that his mouth had fallen open, and that he was dead. . . .

§ 8

It was dark night when I left his deathbed and went back to my own inn down the straggling street of Luzon.

That return to my inn sticks in my memory also as a thing apart, as an experience apart. Within was a subdued bustle of women, a flitting of lights, and the doing of petty offices to that queer exhausted thing that had once been my active and urgent little uncle. For me those offices were irksome and impertinent. I slammed the door, and went out into the warm, foggy drizzle of the village street lit by blurred specks of light in great voids of darkness, and never a soul abroad. That warm veil of fog produced an effect of vast seclusion. The very houses by the roadside peered through it as if from another world. The stillness of the night was marked by an occasional remote baying of dogs; all these people kept dogs because of the near neighbourhood of the frontier.

Death !

It was one of those rare seasons of relief, when for a little time one walks a little outside of and beside life. I felt as I sometimes feel after the end of a play. I saw the whole business of my uncle's life as something familiar and completed. It was done, like a play one leaves, like a book one closes. I thought of the push and the promotions, the noise of London, the crowded various company of people through which our lives had gone, the public meetings, the excitements, the dinners and disputations, and suddenly it appeared to me that none of these things existed. It came to me like a discovery that none of these things existed. Before and after I have thought and called life a phantasmagoria, but never have I felt its truth as I did that night. . . . We had parted; we two, who had kept company so long, had parted. But there was, I knew, no end to him or me. He had died a dream death, and ended a dream, his pain dream was over. It seemed to me almost as though I had died too. What did it matter, since it was unreality, all of it, the pain and desire, the beginning and the end? There was no reality except this solitary road, this quite solitary road, along which one went rather puzzled, rather tired. . . .

Part of the fog became a big mastiff that came towards me and stopped and slunk round me growling, barked tentatively and shortly, and presently became fog again.

My mind swayed back to the ancient beliefs and fears of our race. My doubts and disbeliefs slipped from me like a loosely fitting garment. I wondered quite simply what dogs bayed about the path of that other walker in the darkness, what shapes, what lights, it might be, loomed about him as he went his way from our last encounter on earth—along the paths that are real, and the way that endures for ever ?

§ 9

Last belated figure in that grouping round my uncle's deathbed is my aunt. When it was beyond all hope that my uncle could live, I threw aside whatever concealment remained to us, and telegraphed directly to her. But she came too late to see him living. She saw him calm and still, strangely unlike his habitual garrulous animation, an unfamiliar inflexibility.

" It isn't like him," she whispered, awed by this alien dignity.

I remember her chiefly as she talked and wept upon the bridge below the old castle. We had got rid of some amateurish reporters from Biarritz and had walked together in the hot

morning sunshine down through Port Luzon. There, for a time, we stood leaning on the parapet of the bridge and surveying the distant peaks, the rich blue masses of the Pyrenees. For a long time we said nothing, and then she began talking.

"Life's a rum Go, George!" she began. "Who would have thought, when I used to darn your stockings at old Wimblehurst, that this would be the end of the story? It seems far away now—that little shop, his and my first home. The glow of the bottles, the big coloured bottles! Do you remember how the light shone on the mahogany drawers? The little gilt letters! *Ol Amjig*, and *S'nap!* I can remember it all—bright and shining—like a Dutch picture. Real! And yesterday. And here we are in a dream. You a man—and me an old woman, George. And poor little Teddy, who used to rush about and talk—making that noise he did—Oh!"

She choked, and the tears flowed unrestrained. She wept, and I was glad to see her weeping. . . .

She stood there leaning over the bridge; her tear-wet handkerchief gripped in her clenched hand.

"Just an hour in the old shop again—and him talking. Before things got done. Before they got hold of him. And fooled him.

"Men oughtn't to be so tempted with business and things. . . .

"They didn't hurt him, George?" she asked suddenly.

For a moment I was puzzled.

"Here, I mean," she said.

"No," I lied stoutly, suppressing the memory of that foolish injection needle I had caught the young doctor using.

"I wonder, George, if they'll let him talk in Heaven. . . ."

She faced me. "Oh! George, dear, my heart aches, and I don't know what I say and do. Give me your arm to lean on—it's good to have you, dear, and lean upon you. . . . Yes, I know you care for me. That's why I'm talking. We've always loved one another, and never said anything about it, and you understand, and I understand. But my heart's torn to pieces by this, torn to rags, and things drop out I've kept in it. It's true he wasn't a husband much for me at the last. But he was my child, George, he was my child and all my children, my silly child, and life has knocked him about for me, and I've never had a say in the matter; never a say; it's puffed him up and smashed him—like an old bag—under my eyes. I was clever enough to see it, and not clever enough to prevent it, and all I could do was to jeer. I've had to make what I could of it. Like most people. Like most of us. . . . But it wasn't

fair, George. It wasn't fair. Life and Death—great serious things—why couldn't they leave him alone, and his lies and ways ? If *we* could see the lightness of it——

"Why couldn't they leave him alone ?" she repeated in a whisper as we went towards the inn.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

LOVE AMONG THE WRECKAGE

§ 1

When I came back I found that my share in the escape and death of my uncle had made me for a time a notorious and even popular character. For two weeks I was kept in London "facing the music," as he would have said, and making things easy for my aunt, and I still marvel at the consideration with which the world treated me. For now it was open and manifest that I and my uncle were no more than specimens of a modern species of brigand, wasting the savings of the public out of the sheer wantonness of enterprise. I think that, in a way, his death produced a reaction in my favour, and my flight, of which some particulars now appeared, stuck in the popular imagination. It seemed a more daring and difficult feat than it was, and I couldn't very well write to the papers to sustain my private estimate. There can be little doubt that men infinitely prefer the appearance of dash and enterprise to simple honesty. No one believed I was not an arch plotter in his financing. Yet they favoured me. I even got permission from the trustee to occupy my chalet for a fortnight while I cleared up the mass of papers, calculations, notes of work, drawings and the like, that I left in disorder when I started on that impulsive raid upon the Mordet quap heaps. I was there alone. I got work for Cothope with the Ilchesters, for whom I now build these destroyers. They wanted him at once, and he was short of money, so I let him go and managed very philosophically by myself.

But I found it hard to fix my attention on aeronautics. I had been away from the work for a full half-year and more, a half-year crowded with intense disconcerting things. For a time my brain refused these fine problems of balance and adjustment altogether ; it wanted to think about my uncle's dropping jaw, my aunt's reluctant tears, about dead negroes and pestilential swamps, about the evident realities of cruelty and pain, about life and death. Moreover, it was weary with the fright-

ful pile of figures and documents at the Hardingham, a task to which this raid to Lady Grove was simply an interlude. And there was Beatrice.

On the second morning, as I sat out upon the verandah recalling memories and striving in vain to attend to some too succinct pencil-notes of Cothope's, Beatrice rode up suddenly from behind the pavilion, and pulled rein and became still; Beatrice a little flushed from riding and sitting on a big black horse.

I did not instantly rise. I stared at her. "*You!*" I said.

She looked at me steadily. "Me," she said.

I did not trouble about any civilities. I stood up and asked point blank a question that came into my head.

"Whose horse is that?" I said.

She looked me in the eyes. "Carnaby's," she answered.

"How did you get here—this way?"

"The wall's down."

"Down? Already?"

"A great bit of it between the plantations."

"And you rode through, and got here by chance?"

"I saw you yesterday. And I rode over to see you."

I had now come close to her, and stood looking up into her face.

"I'm a mere vestige," I said.

She made no answer, but remained regarding me steadfastly with a curious air of proprietorship.

"You know I'm the living survivor now of the great smash. I'm rolling and dropping down through all the scaffolding of the social system. . . . It's all a chance whether I roll out free at the bottom, or go down a crack into the darkness out of sight for a year or two."

"The sun," she remarked irrelevantly, "has burnt you. . . . I'm getting down."

She swung herself down into my arms, and stood beside me face to face.

"Where's Cothope?" she asked.

"Gone."

Her eyes flitted to the pavilion and back to me. We stood close together, extraordinarily intimate, and extraordinarily apart.

"I've never seen this cottage of yours," she said, "and I want to."

She flung the bridle of her horse round the verandah post, and I helped her tie it.

"Did you get what you went for to Africa?" she asked.

"No," I said, "I lost my ship."

"And that lost everything?"

"Everything."

She walked before me into the living-room of the chalet, and I saw that she gripped her riding-whip very tightly in her hand. She looked about her for a moment, and then at me.

"It's comfortable," she remarked.

Our eyes met in a conversation very different from the one upon our lips. A sombre glow surrounded us, drew us together; an unwonted shyness kept us apart. She roused herself, after an instant's pause, to examine my furniture.

"You have chintz curtains. I thought men were too feckless to have curtains without a woman—— But, of course, your aunt did that! And a couch and a brass fender, and—is that a pianola? That is your desk. I thought men's desks were always untidy, and covered with dust and tobacco ash."

She flitted to my colour-prints and my little case of books. Then she went to the pianola. I watched her intently.

"Does this thing play?" she said.

"What?" I asked.

"Does this thing play?"

I roused myself from my preoccupation.

"Like a musical gorilla with fingers all of one length. And a sort of soul. . . . It's all the world of music to me."

"What do you play?"

"Beethoven, when I want to clear up my head while I'm working. He is—how one would always like to work. Sometimes Chopin and those others, but Beethoven—Beethoven mainly. Yes."

Silence again between us. She spoke with an effort.

"Play me something." She turned from me and explored the rack of music-rolls, became interested and took a piece, the first part of the Kreutzer Sonata, hesitated. "No," she said, "that!"

She gave me Brahms' Second Concerto, Op. 58, and curled up on the sofa watching me as I set myself slowly to play. . . .

"I say," she said when I had done, "that's fine. I didn't know those things could play like that. I'm all astir. . . ."

She came and stood over me, looking at me. "I'm going to have a concert," she said abruptly and laughed uneasily and hovered at the pigeon-holes. "Now—now what shall I have?" She chose more of Brahms. Then we came to the Kreutzer Sonata. It is queer how Tolstoy has loaded that with suggestions, debauched it, made it a scandalous and intimate symbol.

When I had played the first part of that, she came up to the pianola and hesitated over me. I sat stiffly—waiting.

Suddenly she seized my downcast head and kissed my hair. She caught at my face between her hands and kissed my lips. I put my arms about her and we kissed together. I sprang to my feet and clasped her.

"Beatrice," I said. "Beatrice!"

"My dear," she whispered, nearly breathless, with her arms about me. "Oh! my dear!"

§ 2

Love, like everything else in this immense process of social disorganisation in which we live, is a thing adrift, a fruitless thing broken away from its connections. I tell of this love affair here because of its irrelevance, because it is so remarkable that it should mean nothing, and be nothing except itself. It glows in my memory like some bright casual flower starting up amidst the *débris* of a catastrophe. For nearly a fortnight we two met and made love together. Once more this mighty passion, that our aimless civilisation has fettered and maimed and sterilised and debased, gripped me and filled me with passionate delights and solemn joys—that were all, you know, futile and purposeless. Once more I had the persuasion "This matters. Nothing else matters so much as this." We were both infinitely grave in such happiness as we had. I do not remember any laughter at all between us.

Twelve days it lasted from that encounter in my chalet until our parting.

Except at the end they were days of supreme summer, and there was a waxing moon. We met recklessly day by day. We were so intent upon each other at first, so intent upon expressing ourselves to each other, and getting at each other, that we troubled very little about the appearance of our relationship. We met almost openly. . . . We talked of ten thousand things, and of ourselves. We loved. We made love. There is no prose of mine that can tell of hours transfigured. The facts are nothing. Everything we touched, the meanest things, became glorious. How can I render bare tenderness and delight and mutual possession?

I sit here at my desk thinking of untellable things.

I have come to know so much of love that I know now what love might be. We loved, scarred and stained; we parted—basely and inevitably, but at last I met love.

I remember as we sat in a Canadian canoe, in a reedy, bush-masked shallow we had discovered opening out of that pine-shaded Woking canal, how she fell talking of the things that happened to her before she met me again. . . .

She told me things, and they so joined and welded together other things that lay disconnected in my memory, that it seemed to me I had always known what she told me. And yet indeed I had not known nor suspected it, save perhaps for a luminous, transitory suspicion ever and again.

She made me see how life had shaped her. She told me of her girlhood after I had known her. "We were poor and pretending and managing. We hacked about on visits and things. I ought to have married. The chances I had weren't particularly good chances. I didn't like 'em."

She paused. "Then Carnaby came along."

I remained quite still. She spoke now with downcast eyes, and one finger just touching the water.

"One gets bored, bored beyond redemption. One goes about to these huge expensive houses. I suppose—the scale's immense. One makes oneself useful to the other women, and agreeable to the men. One has to dress. . . . One has food and exercise and leisure. It's the leisure, and the space, and the blank opportunity it seems a sin not to fill. Carnaby isn't like the other men. He's bigger. . . . They go about making love. Everybody's making love. I did. . . . And I don't do things by halves."

She stopped.

"You knew?" she asked, looking up, quite steadily.

I nodded.

"Since when?"

"Those last days. . . . It hasn't seemed to matter really. I was a little surprised——"

She looked at me quietly. "Cothope knew," she said. "By instinct. I could feel it."

"I suppose," I began, "once, this would have mattered immensely. Now——"

"Nothing matters," she said, completing me. "I felt I had to tell you. I wanted you to understand why I didn't marry you—with both hands. I have loved you"—she paused—"have loved you ever since the day I kissed you in the bracken. Only—I forgot."

And suddenly she dropped her face upon her hands, and sobbed passionately—

"I forgot—I forgot," she cried, and became still. . . .

I dabbed my paddle in the water. "Look here!" I said; "forget again! Here am I—a ruined man. Marry me."

She shook her head without looking up.

We were still for a long time. "Marry me," I whispered.

She looked up, twined back a wisp of hair, and answered dispassionately—

"I wish I could. Anyhow, we have had this time. It has been a fine time—has it been—for you also? I haven't grudged you all I had to give. It's a poor gift—except for what it means and might have been. But we are near the end of it now."

"Why?" I asked. "Marry me! Why should we two——"

"You think," she said, "I could take courage and come to you and be your everyday wife—while you work and are poor?"

"Why not?" said I.

She looked at me gravely, with extended finger. "Do you really think that—of me? Haven't you seen me—all?"

I hesitated.

"Never once have I really meant marrying you," she insisted, "Never once. I fell in love with you from the first. But when you seemed a successful man, I told myself I wouldn't. I was love-sick for you, and you were so stupid, I came near it then. But I knew I wasn't good enough. What could I have been to you? A woman with bad habits and bad associations, a woman smirched. And what could I do for you or be to you? If I wasn't good enough to be a rich man's wife, I'm certainly not good enough to be a poor one's. Forgive me for talking sense to you now, but I wanted to tell you this somewhen——"

She stopped at my gesture. I sat up, and the canoe rocked with my movement.

"I don't care," I said. "I want to marry you and make you my wife!"

"No," she said, "don't spoil things. That is impossible!"

"Impossible!"

"Think! I can't do my own hair! Do you mean you will get me a maid?"

"Good God!" I cried, disconcerted beyond measure, "won't you learn to do your own hair for me? Do you mean to say you can love a man——"

She flung out her hands at me. "Don't spoil it," she cried. "I have given you all I have, I have given you all I can. If I could do it, if I was good enough to do it, I would. But I am a woman spoilt and ruined, dear, and you are a ruined man. When we are making love we are lovers—but think of the gulf between us in habits and ways of thought, in will and training,

when we are not making love. Think of it—and don't think of it! Don't think of it yet. We have snatched some hours. We still may have some hours!"

She suddenly knelt forward toward me, with a glowing darkness in her eyes. "Who cares if it upsets?" she cried. "If you say another word I will kiss you. And go to the bottom clutching you. I'm not afraid of that. I'm not a bit afraid of that. I'll die with you. Choose a death, and I'll die with you—readily. Do listen to me! I love you. I shall always love you. It's because I love you that I won't go down to become a dirty familiar thing with you amidst the grime. I've given all I can. I've had all I can. . . . Tell me," and she crept nearer, "have I been like the dusk to you, like the warm dusk? Is there magic still? Listen to the ripple of water from your paddle. Look at the warm evening light in the sky. Who cares if the canoe upsets? Come nearer to me. Oh my love! come near! So."

She drew me to her, and our lips met.

§ 3

I asked her to marry me once again.

It was our last morning together, and we had met very early, about sunrise, knowing that we were to part. No sun shone that day. The sky was overcast, the morning chilly and lit by a clear, cold, spiritless light. A heavy dampness in the air verged close on rain. When I think of that morning, it has always the quality of greying ashes wet with rain.

Beatrice too had changed. The spring had gone out of her movement; it came to me, for the first time, that some day she might grow old. She had become one flesh with the rest of common humanity; the softness had gone from her voice and manner, the dusky magic of her presence had gone. I saw these things with perfect clearness, and they made me sorry for them and for her. But they altered my love not a whit, abated it nothing. And when we had talked awkwardly for half a dozen sentences, I came dully to my point.

"And now," I cried, "will you marry me?"

"No," she said, "I shall keep to my life here."

I asked her to marry me in a year's time. She shook her head.

"This world is a soft world," I said, "in spite of my present disasters. I know now how to do things. If I had you to work for—in a year I could be a prosperous man——"

"No," she said, "I will put it brutally, I shall go back to Carnaby."

"But——!" I did not feel angry. I had no sort of jealousy, no wounded pride, no sense of injury. I had only a sense of grey desolation, of hopeless cross-purposes.

"Look here," she said. "I have been awake all night and every night. I have been thinking of this—every moment when we have not been together. I'm not answering you on an impulse. I love you. I love you. I'll say that over ten thousand times. But here we are——"

"The rest of life together," I said.

"It wouldn't be together. Now we are together. Now we have been together. We are full of memories, I do not feel I can ever forget a single one."

"Nor I."

"And I want to close it and leave it at that. You see, dear, what else is there to do?"

She turned her white face to me. "All I know of love, all I have ever dreamt or learnt of love I have packed into these days for you. You think we might live together and go on loving. No! For you I will have no vain repetitions. You have had the best and all of me. Would you have us, after this, meet again in London or Paris or somewhere, scuffle to some wretched dressmaker's, meet in a *cabinet particulier?*"

"No," I said. "I want you to marry me. I want you to play the game of life with me as an honest woman should. Come and live with me. Be my wife and squaw. Bear me children."

I looked at her white, drawn face, and it seemed to me I might carry her yet. I spluttered for words.

"My God! Beatrice!" I cried; "but this is cowardice and folly! Are *you* afraid of life? You of all people! What does it matter what has been or what we were? Here we are with the world before us! Start clean and new with me. We'll fight it through! I'm not such a simple lover that I'll not tell you plainly when you go wrong, and fight our difference out with you. It's the one thing I want, the one thing I need—to have you, and more of you and more! This love-making—it's love-making. It's just a part of us, an incident——"

She shook her head and stopped me abruptly. "It's all," she said.

"All!" I protested.

"I'm wiser than you. Wiser beyond words."

She turned her eyes to me and they shone with tears.

"I wouldn't have you say anything—but what you're

saying," she said. "But it's nonsense, dear. You know it's nonsense as you say it."

I tried to keep up the heroic note, but she would not listen to it.

"It's no good," she cried almost petulantly. "This little world has made—made us what we are. Don't you see—don't you see what I am? I can make love. I can make love and be loved, prettily. Dear, don't blame me! I have given you all I have. If I had anything more—— I have gone through it all over and over again—thought it out. This morning my head aches, my eyes ache. The light has gone out of me and I am a sick and tired woman. But I'm talking wisdom —bitter wisdom. I couldn't be any sort of helper to you, any sort of wife, any sort of mother. I'm spoilt. I'm spoilt by this rich idle way of living, until every habit is wrong, every taste wrong. The world is wrong. People can be ruined by wealth just as much as by poverty. Do you think I wouldn't face life with you if I could, if I wasn't absolutely certain I should be down and dragging in the first half-mile of the journey? Here I am—damned! Damned! But I won't damn you. You know what I am. You know. You are too clear and simple not to know the truth. You try to romance and hector, but you know the truth. I am a little cad—sold and done. I'm—— My dear, you think I've been misbehaving, but all these days I've been on my best behaviour. . . . You don't understand, because you're a man. A woman, when she's spoilt, is *spoilt*. She's dirty in grain. She's done."

She walked on weeping.

"You're a fool to want me," she said. "You're a fool to want me—for my sake just as much as yours. We've done all we can. It's just romancing——"

She dashed the tears from her eyes and turned upon me. "Don't you understand?" she challenged. "Don't you know?"

We faced one another in silence for a moment.

"Yes," I said, "I know."

For a long time we spoke never a word, but walked on together, slowly and sorrowfully, reluctant to turn about towards our parting. When at last we did, she broke silence again.

"I've had you," she said.

"Heaven and hell," I said, "can't alter that."

"I've wanted——" she went on. "I've talked to you in the nights and made up speeches. Now when I want to make

them I'm tongue-tied. But to me it's just as if the moments we have had lasted for ever. Moods and states come and go. To-day my light is out. . . ."

To this day I cannot determine whether she said or whether I imagined she said "chloral." Perhaps a half-conscious diagnosis flashed it on my brain. Perhaps I am the victim of some perverse imaginative freak of memory, some hinted possibility that scratched and seared. There the word stands in my memory, as if it were written in fire.

We came to the door of Lady Osprey's garden at last, and it was beginning to drizzle.

She held out her hands and I took them.

"Yours," she said, in a weary unimpassioned voice; "all that I had—such as it was. Will you forget?"

"Never," I answered.

"Never a touch or a word of it?"

"No."

"You will," she said.

We looked at one another in silence, and her face was full of fatigue and misery.

What could I do? What was there to do?

"I wish——" I said, and stopped.

"Good-bye."

§ 4

That should have been the last I saw of her, but, indeed, I was destined to see her once again. Two days after I was at Lady Grove, I forget altogether upon what errand, and as I walked back to the station believing her to be gone away she came upon me, and she was riding with Carnaby, just as I had seen them first. The encounter jumped upon us unprepared. She rode by, her eyes dark in her white face, and scarcely noticed me. She winced and grew stiff at the sight of me and bowed her head. But Carnaby, because he thought I was a broken and discomfited man, saluted me with an easy friendliness, and shouted some genial commonplace to me.

They passed out of sight and left me by the roadside. . . .

And then indeed I tasted the ultimate bitterness of life. For the first time I felt utter futility, and was wrung by emotion that begot no action, by shame and pity beyond words. I had parted from her dully and I had seen my uncle break and die with dry eyes and a steady mind, but this chance sight of my lost Beatrice brought me to tears. My face was wrung, and tears came pouring down my cheeks. All the magic she had

for me had changed to wild sorrow. "O God!" I cried, "this is too much," and turned my face after her and made appealing gestures to the beech-trees and cursed at fate. I wanted to do preposterous things, to pursue her, to save her, to turn life back so that she might begin again. I wonder what would have happened had I overtaken them in pursuit, breathless with running, uttering incoherent words, weeping, expostulatory. I came near to doing that.

There was nothing in earth or heaven to respect my curses or weeping. In the midst of it a man who had been trimming the opposite hedge appeared and stared at me.

Abruptly, ridiculously, I dissembled before him and went on and caught my train. . . .

But the pain I felt then I have felt a hundred times; it is with me as I write. It haunts this book, I see; that is what haunts this book from end to end. . . .

CHAPTER THE THIRD

NIGHT AND THE OPEN SEA

§ 1

I HAVE tried throughout all this story to tell things as they happened to me. In the beginning—the sheets are still here on the table, grimy and dog's-eared and old-looking—I said I wanted to tell *myself* and the world in which I found myself, and I have done my best. But whether I have succeeded I cannot imagine. All this writing is grey now and dead and trite and unmeaning to me; some of it I know by heart. I am the last person to judge it.

As I turn over the big pile of manuscript before me, certain things become clearer to me, and particularly the immense inconsequence of my experiences. It is, I see now that I have it all before me, a story of activity and urgency and sterility. I have called it *Tono-Bungay* but I had far better have called it *Waste;* I have told of childless Marion, of my childless aunt, of Beatrice wasted and wasteful and futile. What hope is there for a people whose women become fruitless? I think of all the energy I have given to vain things. I think of my industrious scheming with my uncle, of Crest Hill's vast cessation, of his resonant strenuous career. Ten thousand men have envied him and wished to live as he lived. It is all one spectacle of forces running to waste, of people who use and do not replace,

the story of a country hectic with a wasting aimless fever of trade and money-making and pleasure-seeking. And now I build destroyers !

Other people may see this country in other terms ; this is how I have seen it. In some early chapter in this heap I compared all our present colour and abundance to October foliage before the frosts nip down the leaves. That I still feel was a good image. Perhaps I see wrongly. It may be I see decay all about me because I am, in a sense, decay. To others it may be a scene of achievement and construction radiant with hope. I too have a sort of hope, but it is a remote hope, a hope that finds no promise in this Empire or in any of the great things of our time. How they will look in history I do not know, how time and chance will prove them I cannot guess ; that is how they have mirrored themselves on one contemporary mind.

§ 2

Concurrently with writing the last chapter of this book I have been much engaged by the affairs of a new destroyer we have completed. It has been an oddly complementary alternation of occupations. Three weeks or so ago this novel had to be put aside in order that I might give all my time day and night to the fitting and finishing of the engines. Last Thursday X 2, for so we call her, was done and I took her down the Thames, and went out nearly to Texel for a trial of speed.

It is curious how at times one's impressions will all fuse and run together into a sort of unity and become continuous with things that have hitherto been utterly alien and remote. That rush down the river became mysteriously connected with this book. As I passed down the Thames I seemed in a new and parallel manner to be passing all England in review. I saw it then as I had wanted my readers to see it. The thought came to me slowly as I picked my way through the Pool ; it stood out clear as I went dreaming into the night out upon the wide North Sea. . . .

It wasn't so much thinking at the time as a sort of photographic thought that came and grew clear. X 2 went ripping through the dirty oily water as scissors rip through canvas, and the front of my mind was all intent with getting her through under the bridges and in and out among the steamboats and barges and rowing-boats and piers. I lived with my hands and eyes hard ahead. I thought nothing then of any appearances

but obstacles, but for all that the back of my mind took the photographic memory of it complete and vivid. . . .

"This," it came to me, "is England. This is what I wanted to give in my book. This!"

We started in the late afternoon. We throbbed out of our yard above Hammersmith Bridge, fussed about for a moment, and headed down stream. We came at an easy rush down Craven Reach, past Fulham and Hurlingham, past the long stretches of muddy meadow and muddy suburb to Battersea and Chelsea, round the cape of tidy frontage that is Grosvenor Road and under Vauxhall Bridge, and Westminster opened before us. We cleared a string of coal-barges and there on the left in the October sunshine stood the Parliament houses and the flag was flying and Parliament was sitting. . . .

I saw it at the time unseeingly; afterwards it came into my mind as the centre of the whole broad panoramic effect of that afternoon. The stiff square lace of Victorian Gothic with its Dutch clock of a tower came upon me suddenly and stared and whirled past in a slow half-pirouette and became still, I know, behind me as if watching me recede. "Aren't you going to respect me, then?" it seemed to say.

Not I! There in that great pile of Victorian architecture the landlords and the lawyers, the bishops, the railway men and the magnates of commerce go to and fro—in their incurable tradition of commercialised Bladesovery, of meretricious gentry and nobility sold for riches. I have been near enough to know. The Irish and the Labour men run about among their feet, making a fuss, effecting little; they've got no better plans that I can see. Respect it indeed! There's a certain paraphernalia of dignity, but whom does it deceive? The King comes down in a gilt coach to open the show and wears long robes and a crown; and there's a display of stout and slender legs in white stockings and stout and slender legs in black stockings and artful old gentlemen in ermine. I was reminded of one congested afternoon I had spent with my aunt amidst a cluster of agitated women's hats in the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords and how I saw the King going to open Parliament, and the Duke of Devonshire looking like a gorgeous pedlar and terribly bored with the cap of maintenance on a tray before him hung by slings from his shoulders. A wonderful spectacle! . . .

It is quaint no doubt, this England—it is even dignified in places—and full of mellow associations. That does not alter the quality of the realities these robes conceal. The realities are greedy trade, base profit-seeking, bold advertisement—and

kingship and chivalry, spite of this wearing of treasured robes, are as dead among it all as that crusader my uncle championed against the nettles outside the Duffield church. . . .

I have thought much of that bright afternoon's panorama.

To run down the Thames so is to run one's hand over the pages in the book of England from end to end. One begins in Craven Reach and it is as if one were in the heart of old England. Behind us are Kew and Hampton Court with their memories of Kings and Cardinals, and one runs at first between Fulham's episcopal garden-parties and Hurlingham's playground for the sporting instinct of our race. The whole effect is English. There is space, there are old trees and all the best qualities of the home-land in that upper reach. Putney, too, looks Anglican on a dwindling scale. And then for a stretch the newer developments slop over, one misses Bladesover and there come first squalid stretches of mean homes right and left and then the dingy industrialism of the south side, and on the north bank the polite long front of nice houses, artistic, literary, administrative people's residences, that stretches from Cheyne Walk nearly to Westminster and hides a wilderness of slums. What a long slow crescendo that is, mile after mile, with the houses crowding closelier, the multiplying succession of church towers, the architectural moments, the successive bridges, until you come out into the second movement of the piece with Lambeth's old palace under your quarter and the Houses of Parliament on your bow! Westminster Bridge is ahead of you then and through it you flash, and in a moment the round-faced clock-tower cranes up to peer at you again and New Scotland Yard squares at you, a fat beef-eater of a policeman disguised miraculously as a Bastile.

For a stretch you have the essential London; you have Charing Cross railway station, heart of the world, and the Embankment on the north side with its new hotels overshadowing its Georgian and Victorian architecture, and mud and great warehouses and factories, chimneys, shot-towers, advertisements on the south. The northward skyline grows more intricate and pleasing, and more and more does one thank God for Wren. Somerset House is as picturesque as the civil war, one is reminded again of the original England, one feels in the fretted sky the quality of Restoration lace.

And then comes Astor's strong-box and the lawyers' Inns. . . .

(I had a passing memory of myself there, how once I had trudged along the Embankment westward, weighing my uncle's offer of three hundred pounds a year. . . .)

Through that central essential London reach I drove, and X 2 bored her nose under the foam regardless of it all like a black hound going through reeds—on what trail even I who made her cannot tell.

And in this reach too, one first meets the seagulls and is reminded of the sea. Blackfriars one takes—just under these two bridges and just between them is the finest bridge moment in the world—and behold, soaring up, hanging in the sky over a rude tumult of warehouses, over a jostling competition of traders, irrelevantly beautiful and altogether remote, Saint Paul's! "Of course!" one says, "Saint Paul's!" It is the very figure of whatever fineness the old Anglican culture achieved, detached, a more dignified and chastened Saint Peter's, colder, greyer but still ornate; it has never been overthrown, never disavowed, only the tall warehouses and all the roar of traffic have forgotten it, every one has forgotten it; the steamships, the barges, go heedlessly by regardless of it, intricacies of telephone wires and poles cut blackly into its thin mysteries and presently, when in a moment the traffic permits you and you look round for it, it has dissolved like a cloud into the grey-blues of the London sky.

And then the traditional and ostensible England falls from you altogether. The third movement begins, the last great movement in the London symphony, in which the trim scheme of the old order is altogether dwarfed and swallowed up. Comes London Bridge, and the great warehouses tower up about you waving stupendous cranes, the gulls circle and scream in your ears, large ships lie among their lighters, and one is in the port of the world. Again and again in this book I have written of England as a feudal scheme overtaken by fatty degeneration and stupendous accidents of hypertrophy. For the last time I must strike that note as the memory of the dear neat little sunlit ancient Tower of London lying away in a gap among the warehouses comes back to me, that little accumulation of buildings so provincially pleasant and dignified, overshadowed by the vulgarest, most typical exploit of modern England, the sham Gothic casings to the ironwork of the Tower Bridge. That Tower Bridge is the very balance and confirmation of Westminster's dull pinnacles and tower. That sham Gothic bridge; in the very gates of our mother of change, the Sea!

But after that one is in a world of accident and nature. For the third part of the panorama of London is beyond all law, order, and precedence, it is the seaport and the sea. One goes down the widening reaches through a monstrous variety of

shipping, great steamers, great sailing-ships, trailing the flags of all the world, a monstrous confusion of lighters, witches' conferences of brown-sailed barges, wallowing tugs, a tumultuous crowding and jostling of cranes and spars, and wharves and stores, and assertive inscriptions. Huge vistas of dock open right and left of one, and here and there beyond and amidst it all are church towers, little patches of indescribably old-fashioned and worn-out houses, riverside pubs and the like, vestiges of townships that were long since torn to fragments and submerged in these new growths. And amidst it all no plan appears, no intention, no comprehensive desire. That is the very key of it all. Each day one feels that the pressure of commerce and traffic grew, grew insensibly monstrous, and first this man made a wharf and that erected a crane, and then this company set to work and then that, and so they jostled together to make this unassimilable enormity of traffic. Through it we dodged and drove, eager for the high seas.

I remember how I laughed aloud at the glimpse of the name of a London County Council steamboat that ran across me. *Caxton* it was called and another was *Pepys* and another was *Shakespeare*. They seemed so wildly out of place splashing about in that confusion. One wanted to take them out and wipe them and put them back in some English gentleman's library. Everything was alive about them, flashing, splashing, and passing, ships moving, tugs panting, hawsers taut, barges going down with men toiling at the sweeps, the water all aswirl with the wash of shipping scaling into millions of little wavelets, curling and frothing under the whip of the unceasing wind. Past it all we drove. And at Greenwich to the south, you know, there stands a fine stone frontage where all the victories are recorded in a Painted Hall, and beside it is the "Ship" where once upon a time those gentlemen of Westminster used to have an annual dinner—before the port of London got too much for them altogether. The old façade of the Hospital was just warming to the sunset as we went by, and after that, right and left, the river opened, the sense of the sea increased and prevailed reach after reach from Northfleet to the Nore.

And out you come at last with the sun behind you into the eastern sea. You speed up and tear the oily water louder and faster, sirroo, sirroo—swish—sirroo, and the hills of Kent—over which I once fled from the Christian teachings of Nicodemus Frapp—fall away on the right hand and Essex on the left. They fall away and vanish into blue haze and the tall slow ships behind the tugs, scarce moving ships and wallowing sturdy

tugs, are all wrought of wet gold as one goes frothing by. They stand out bound on strange missions of life and death, to the killing of men in unfamiliar lands. And now behind us is blue mystery and the phantom flash of unseen lights, and presently even these are gone, and I and my destroyer tear out to the unknown across a great grey space. We tear into the great spaces of the future and the turbines fall to talking in unfamiliar tongues. Out to the open we go, to windy freedom and trackless ways. Light after light goes down. England and the Kingdom, Britain and the Empire, the old prides and the old devotions, glide abeam, astern, sink down upon the horizon, pass—pass. The river passes—London passes, England passes. . . .

§ 3

This is the note I have tried to emphasise, the note that sounds clear in my mind when I think of anything beyond the purely personal aspects of my story.

It is a note of crumbling and confusion, of change and seemingly aimless swelling, of a bubbling up and medley of futile loves and sorrows. But through the confusion sounds another note. Through the confusion something drives, something that is at once human achievement and the most inhuman of all existing things. Something comes out of it. . . . How can I express the values of a thing at once so essential and so immaterial. It is something that calls upon such men as I with an irresistible appeal.

I have figured it in my last section by the symbol of my destroyer, stark and swift, irrelevant to most human interests. Sometimes I call this reality Science, sometimes I call it Truth. But it is something we draw by pain and effort out of the heart of life, that we disentangle and make clear. Other men serve it, I know, in art, in literature, in social invention, and see it in a thousand different figures, under a hundred names. I see it always as austerity, as beauty. This thing we make clear is the heart of life. It is the one enduring thing. Men and nations, epochs and civilisations pass, each making its contribution. I do not know what it is, this something, except that it is supreme. It is a something, a quality, an element, one may find now in colours, now in forms, now in sounds, now in thoughts. It emerges from life with each year one lives and feels, and generation by generation and age by age, but the how and why of it are all beyond the compass of my mind. . . .

Yet the full sense of it was with me all that night as I drove,

lonely above the rush and murmur of my engines, out upon the weltering circle of the sea. . . .

Far out to the north-east there came the flicker of a squadron of warships waving white swords of light about the sky. I kept them hull-down, and presently they were mere summer lightning over the watery edge of the globe. . . . I fell into thought that was nearly formless, into doubts and dreams that have no words, and it seemed good to me to drive ahead and on and on through the windy starlight, over the long black waves.

§ 4

It was morning and day before I returned with the four sick and starving journalists who had got permission to come with me, up the shining river, and past the old grey Tower. . . .

I recall the back views of those journalists very distinctly going with a certain damp weariness of movement up a side street away from the river. They were good men and bore me no malice, and they served me up to the public in turgid degenerate Kiplingese, as a modest button on the complacent stomach of the Empire. Though as a matter of fact, X 2 isn't intended for the Empire, or indeed for the hands of any European Power. We offered it to our own people first, but they would have nothing to do with me, and I have long since ceased to trouble much about such questions. I have come to see myself from the outside, my country from the outside—without illusions. We make and pass.

We are all things that make and pass, striving upon a hidden mission, out to the open sea.

THE END

THE MONTH

EDITORIAL: *THE FUNCTION OF THE ARTS IN THE REPUBLIC—IV. The Plastic Arts.* ❧ ❧ **POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC:** MODERN LIFE—(i) H. BELLOC, *The Source of Information;* (ii) G. K. CHESTERTON, *The Homelessness of Jones;* (iii) D. S., *The Russian Spy System: The Azeff Scandals in Russia.*

❧ ❧

EDITORIAL

The Function of the Arts in the Republic

IV. The Plastic Arts

Since the Plastic Arts are, in this country at least, most recognised by the State, we may, in their case more definitely than in those of their sisters, trace their effects upon the people as a whole. For we are concerned with the people as a whole; with the body politic, not with classes cultured or productively artistic. For Music, the State and the Corporations do very little: for Literature nothing at all is done—of a State expenditure of £160,000,000 per annum £400 is paid for the production and fostering of Letters. It is paid to the Poet Laureate: we believe indeed that it is paid to him not *quâ* poet but in his capacity of Historiographer Royal. But upon architects, sculptors and painters some sums of money are spent year by year—not perhaps enough to pay in any one year for a torpedo-boat, but still some money. What then does the State receive in return?

What actually can the State receive in return for its services to the Arts? Immediately, certain financial benefits. By its beauty a city may attract visitors: by its monuments, its paintings, its dramatic performances, its operas. It would be difficult to estimate how many people the purchase of, say, the Rokeby Velazquez attracts to London. But let us make, tentatively, the essay. We are personally acquainted with two German gentlemen, with one Frenchman and with one Italian, who have made visits to this country with the single purpose of studying this masterpiece. Let us say that the National Gallery contains one hundred masterpieces, each of which attracts four specialists per annum. Let us put their expenditure at £10 each per visit. Thus from the class of strict specialists alone we may set it down tentatively that the National Gallery attracts

£4000 per annum. Let us say that the attractions of the Tate and Wallace Galleries are half as valuable, those of South Kensington and the British Museum of equal value. We arrive at a working hypothesis that, from the student class alone, the National Collections draw a sum of £16,000 per annum. At £4 per cent. this represents a capital value of £400,000.

Let us add to these, say, ten times as many people who come attracted to the National Collections as a whole, and we arrive at a capital value of £4,400,000. Let us add again ten times as many as this last class on account of another class who visit this country, not so much for the purpose of seeing its monuments and its Art treasures, but to whom the existence of these things is the determining inducement for a visit—the intelligent Chinaman, Japanese or Hindu who wishes to "do" Europe for the sake of social prestige or because his ladies desire to "shop." We arrive thus at a capital value of £44,400,000. And this is in addition to the actual value in the market of the works of art themselves. We think therefore that we have proved to the intelligent business men who conduct our affairs that money spent upon the Arts is not only money invested in sound securities but that it adds distinctly to the goodwill of the nation as a going concern.

In fact it should be the ideal of a State directed upon soundly commercial lines to become the Art centre of the world. It pays. Indeed nothing pays so well. London is the largest city in the world, largely because she is also the pleasantest, and she is the pleasantest almost entirely because of her gentle and delicate æsthetic appearance, on account of her grey days, her grey vistas that so admirably soften and harmonise her masses of architecture.

To the cultivated reader these sentiments may appear merely ironical or merely paradoxical, but actually they are sound and dry sense. The attractiveness, "the pull" of a city consists in innumerable small magnetisms. In the first place it must be accessible and perhaps it is only finally that it should turn its attention to the task of being attractive. This it may do. This it will most surely do by paying attention to the Arts. It is of course impossible that London should be the literary centre of the world although the English language is that most widely spoken and most widely written. But there is an inherent

individualism in the English man of letters ; there is an inherent shame in him which makes him desire to be regarded as anything but a man of letters. His aspiration is to be always a social figure, a philanthropist, a preacher, a fisherman, or a "man of action." The actual practice of his craft thus loses its cohesive force, so that it is almost impossible to find in England what is found in almost every other European capital—a society of men eagerly discussing their Art, sinking personal jealousies in the thirst for mutual sharpening of the wits, in the divine curiosity to discover how things are done. The English man of letters of any distinction lives apart, dotted over the face of the country, each one isolated, as it were, upon a little hill. He has no Academy like that of the Immortal Forty ; he belongs to no movement and in consequence the Art of Letters in England has practically no social weight and practically no contact with the life of the people. It is with the attempt to form some such meeting-place that THE ENGLISH REVIEW has set out upon its career—that the attempt is foredoomed to failure we know very well, for to attempt to form a combination of strong individualists is obviously the attempt of a madman. The English public takes some, but very little, interest in the Art of Letters. The English man of letters takes none at all. The English State devotes .00000025 of its expenditure to this, the most despised of the Arts, yet when we consider how much the election of a new Academician in France adds to the gaiety of the nation, when we consider the canvassings, the discussions, how much the city stands on tip-toe and what a distinguished function the delivering of the discourses creates, we see that the Art of Letters, by its mere machinery, adds immensely to the attractiveness of the City of Paris. And there are all the other academies and societies—societies of "admirers of Monsieur Verhaeren," of "admirers of Monsieur Saint-Paul le Roux the Magnificent"—scores of societies, all these adding to the social amenities, the gaieties, adding to "the pull" of the City of Paris.

WE have, we believe, one such society in England, but it is devoted to the practitioner of a sister Art. And indeed the case of the other Arts in England is very different. We have musical festivals. We have an expensive Opera. We have Royal Academies of Music and of Painting. The Royal Academy of Arts, if it be a body falling lamentably short of any high ideal of the fostering of the Arts and if its commercial tactics be of the most ludicrous description—for it is impossible to imagine anything more calculated to prevent patrons purchasing works of

modern painters, it is impossible to imagine anything more calculated to serve as an awful warning than these dreary acres of walls, covered with mediocre productions of mediocre men, Royal Academicians and others, in the McCulloch collection, which for reasons of trade has this year replaced the exhibition of Old Masters—yet whatever its shortcomings the Royal Academy exists. It has a certain power of attraction. Its private views are functions conferring some social distinction on the Fine Arts. Its exhibitions attract large numbers of not very intelligent people. Still it exists and it attracts, and occasionally its exhibitions, like Mr. McCulloch's, contain, carefully skied, or hung to as much disadvantage as possible, works that are almost works of genius.

Now if the State, realising the commercial advantages of the Arts to the nation, instead of delegating benevolently its functions to the purely commercial gentlemen who form the Royal Academy of Arts, could open its eyes to the extent of seeing that it would be really profitable to pay attention to two things, we might put the Empire upon a very safe commercial basis by insuring against national calamities. For money spent in adding æsthetic amenities is the best of all insurances for a nation. It is of course a good thing to build battleships. To frame tariffs may or may not be profitable. It is possible to contemplate the hypothesis that trade will follow a flag. But flags, in the inevitable course of years, are trampled in the mud. The time arrives for all nations when, trade being gone, all tariffs are useless. And eventually all battleships end on the scrapheap or on the sea-ooze. Then a nation that has its Parthenon or its Sistine Madonna finds its account.

Moreover there is the influence of the Arts upon national character. Italy is Italy not only because it contains Siena, Rimini and the Pitti Palace. It contains the lovable Italians—the men whom generations of æsthetic traditions have rendered lovable. That anything would ever render the Englishman lovable or induce the English State to aspire to the building of a Parthenon—that may seem an aspiration to an unthinkable perfection. But by pointing out—by proving—that it would pay, we may have done something. We may never have a Parthenon: perhaps one day we may nerve ourselves, say, to the extent of being proud of the National Gallery or of cleaning out from that Augean stable, the Tate, its huge proportion of dreary and inane canvases. E. R.

POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC

Modern Life

I. THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION

By H. Belloc

When there is present in society some evident evil, the first attitude which men take towards it is to confront it with legislation. Opinion demands a law which commonly, or always, fails. Why does it fail? Why does a law designed by human wit to correct a human evil usually fail to correct it, at least in our society to-day? The answer is probably to be found in the insufficient analysis to which such an evil is submitted before it is attacked. The obstacle or foreign body which thus irritates society arises in a highly complex medium and is usually itself complex. Yet it is treated as simple force.

If its nature were studied carefully before the attempt to eliminate it was made, one might find indeed that legislation was an imperfect or a useless method of attack, but one would know what one was dealing with: one would know whether the knife or the drug was the surest way of destroying the thing. One would know what the enemy was likely to do under such and such circumstances, what its reactions were and what its probable avenues of concealment or escape.

We suffer in England to-day from an evil now generally admitted, and one the knowledge of which has passed from a commonplace among educated men to a joke among the mass of the people. This evil is the impurity of the sources from which we derive our knowledge of public affairs. That information, which is the right of every family in the State, is cancelled or warped at pleasure. Conversely, subjects which are not of public interest are artificially raised into the sphere of public debate. Emphasis is laid now here, now there, upon details arbitrarily chosen, in order to benefit an interest, sometimes racial, more often religious and nearly always financial, and there appears to be no form of activity whereby the plain citizen may withstand these corrupt forces to which he is daily subject. Does a small group of men imagine that war will enrich its members? The public can, in an amazingly short time, be led

to desire that war. The enemy, of whom perhaps they have never heard, can be presented to them in any light which those who control the sources of information please. Is it desired to benefit a particular man who has got into some foreign prison? All in his favour can be brought forward, all against him suppressed, and his private sufferings, just or unjust, can be made in a week or two as much a matter for intense public enthusiasm as the security of this island from invasion or the plague. Is it thought advisable to keep concealed some aspect of a public character or of a public policy? That aspect cannot be concealed within the narrow boundaries of what is called "the governing class." *There* it is discussed as freely and much more cynically than it would have been discussed by the populace in general during the eighteenth century; but outside this narrow circle it can to-day be kept as dark as though it did not exist. And, in general, the whole mass of public information, upon which Englishmen depend for the nourishment of public opinion, has long been, and is now everywhere admitted to be, tarnished at the source. We do not get a true picture of the world in which we live. We get a picture which now warps, now inflames, our imagination, which breeds sudden fanaticisms upon petty things and a dulness upon important things. This evil is of the first magnitude; an appreciation of its nature is essential to its cure.

I say it is an evil of the first magnitude; but here, I know, there is something to be admitted upon the other side. This artificial control of the sources of information has advantages especially evident to the statesman, the more evident, I think, in proportion to his patriotism and to his zeal in the public service. For the more zealous he is in the public service the more he will discover how dangerous it might be to permit some domestic or foreign situation to become general property, and the more he acquaints himself with its details the more will he tremble for the consequences that might follow from a sudden flooding of the popular mind with the truth. The popular mind would appreciate that truth only in the rough, it might be led to an honest but a disastrous violence in some direction which, however moral its aim, would be fatal to the State. The statesmen of foreign nations envy England in nothing more than this, that the sources of information in this country open and close mechanically as at a word of command, and that the public knowledge of this or that can be canalised almost at will. It lends to our foreign policy, in particular, a unity of action which you will not find anywhere abroad; it

permits the preparation of important acts, however lengthy, to be secret, and it invariably gives our Ministers the power to plead a violent public opinion in excuse for actions or policies which bring us into conflict with our neighbours.

It must be admitted that to a commercial nation, deprived for the moment of a serious armed force, such a weapon is very valuable indeed; nevertheless I would maintain that the balance is heavily against it. I do not mean the moral balance only, though that has its weight; I mean the balance in practical affairs. You may maintain such a system for twenty, for thirty years, and you may save half a dozen great and dangerous situations by it, but there will come a moment when events are just too strong for the hand that guides the play of falsehood, when you must have the nation vividly and accurately informed, and when you find in the moment of defeat that the nation has lost its power of judgment upon exact information. Our statesmen and our financiers take it too much for granted that the great mass of the working and professional population may be left out of account in matters of policy, that their good must be considered, but that their opinion is valueless save as a brute foundation on which to repose the exterior action of the State. It has never been permanently so with any nation, however strictly oligarchic its temper and conditions. There always comes a moment when you must appeal to the sense of proportion and to the fund of knowledge possessed by your people as a whole. If no one, for a generation, has believed either of these things to be of public value, then, in that moment, the scheme of society breaks down.

If it be granted that the evil of this sort of discipline in controlling what Englishmen know outweighs its good, our next business is to establish its character, and this we can do by a consideration of its present state and of the historic process by which it reached that state.

First, as to its present state, the method by which the sources of information are now controlled is the following. We live under urban conditions, and under urban conditions which are not those of the City State; there is no market-place, as there was in the cities of antiquity, and very little of the local corporate feeling that distinguishes most Irish and Continental municipal life. Our urban conditions mean that we are highly isolated from one another, and that a man's relations with his fellow men are a sort of anarchy of individual connections, most of them concerned with gain, some few with sympathy. From nature, which is the corrective of such isolation, we are

cut off. The permanent influence of landscape and of organic life other than human is denied us. Our interests therefore necessarily lie in a number of matters which we cannot individually judge. We do not see, any one of us, enough of our fellows in corporate action to seize what is natural to man and to distinguish it from what is not natural to him. We are ready to believe of our fellow men actions most inconsequent to their nature, and to accept almost any statement if only it be sufficiently reiterated.

Again, this way of living in our great cities cuts us off from any continuity of experience. A man will believe to-day what he has seen printed, and he will even be fanatical about it; to-morrow he will believe the opposite because he has seen the opposite printed. He will readily contradict himself upon all these subjects of information and that for a very simple reason, that the information does not touch anything of which he has personal knowledge or of which he can privately judge. It is in the air. It is a series of phrases. A man will get wildly excited about the images those phrases call up, but he will not be suffering an emotion relative to real things. Poignant as his emotion is, it has no substance; it is but a smokewhich can in a moment wreathe up and disappear. Another vapour from another quarter, from the very opposite quarter perhaps, may at once take its place.

I take it for granted that no reader of these words doubts the existence of the evil which I mention, and that the reader, though he may differ from me as to its nature and remedy or even as to the balance of evil which it contains, does not, as so many might still have done twenty years ago, remain ignorant of its existence. It may none the less be of value to cite first hypothetical then real examples.

A Cabinet Minister (let us say) [redacted] Supposing such a thing to take place, what information would the public have upon it?

Another hypothesis: suppose a Colonial Governor [redacted] Supposing such a thing to happen, how many Englishmen in a million would hear of it?

To turn to foreign affairs: let an alliance be thought advisable with a certain country; that country puts to death in cold

blood (and mutilates after death) a number of prisoners of war. In what organ of opinion should we find this truth ?

An understanding is thought advisable with another Power ; this Power obtains information in the field by the persistent use of the most horrible forms of torture. Where would the public discover this fact ?

All these are of course hypothetical cases, but there are concrete and well-known instances enough in all conscience. For instance, the other day the violent sectarian hatred of the men who are for the moment in power in France brought the body of Zola to the Pantheon. The ceremony was applauded and English opinion was guided to believe that the event had in it something just and grandiose. In what place could Englishmen learn the man's full title to dishonour ? His works, indeed, in their utter bestiality are well known here, for they were largely written for our market and secretly they are still largely read. But what educated opinion was ever formed upon his origins ? The father kicked out of the army for cheating in the commissariat, the lad brought up to an hereditary hatred of military and of religious things and venting his hatred in the last violent attack during which he died. Every Frenchman knows these things, and if it be maintained that they are indifferent to Englishmen—as indeed they should be—then why has so much of our foreign information for ten years centred round the low and unpleasing figure of a man twice condemned for treason, supported by the cosmopolitan finance of Europe, amnestied, the centre of a discord with which we had in this country nothing to do and yet of which we made our principal public occupation for many months ?

Or to take another case : the information with regard to South Africa. What Englishman had a chance to form a judgment save by actual presence in those Colonies or Republics ? Who, during all the time that the Jameson letter was waiting [redacted] in the office of the [redacted], knew that the Jameson raid was in preparation ?

Or, again, in the case of Russia, what credible general picture has been presented of the parties to the abortive revolution ?

Or, again, in the case of Ireland, how many Englishmen have heard [redacted] more money to this perjurer after the perjury becomes known,

prevents any prosecution and aids him in leaving the country. To a million people who have heard of the martyrdom of their unhappy Dreyfus, how many have heard of these Irishmen ?

The list might be indefinitely extended. It remains to emphasise the fact that all this mass of concealment, falsehood and corruption works through and is what we call " the press." Half a dozen daily newspapers control the opinion of London—and London is one-fifth of England in numbers, more than a quarter in economic power. Another dozen or so control the provinces. Beyond this source of public information there is nothing but letters and word of mouth. Letters and word of mouth are the basis of judgment of the governing class, but they mean nothing to the millions. The governing class smiles when some one brings in at table the [redacted] or the " pressure " exercised by some wealthy vulgarian in the matter of a Government Bill, or the purchase out of public money for an indefinitely large sum of a politician's land, or the sum for which and the conditions under which legislative power was purchased in a particular case. The mass of England hears and knows nothing of these things.

The conclusion which a being dropped from another planet or even from another country would draw from all this would be that a few men of exceptional ingenuity and of infamous character owned our newspapers. He would be hopelessly wrong. Many of the owners are quite indifferent to what appears in their papers, those who do care are considering questions of space and of advertisement much more than cases of martyred financiers who go to prison for treason, or of Venetian pornographers who are made the symbols of anti-Christian feeling. It is probable, to take a particular example, that of all the large newspaper proprietors in England not one had a direct interest in South African shares. It is certain that not one, at least of the educated men, had the slightest knowledge of, or sympathy with, the remote Japanese race.

Our foreign visitor may next be imagined putting the blame upon the editors. Wrong again. The editor of any one of these great papers is a man chosen for certain qualities of management and of regular application. No one much concerns themselves upon his views ; he is by the nature of his work anything but an untrustworthy man ; he is intellectually incapable of intrigue and is chiefly concerned in maintaining the salaried post which has been granted him. Well then (the visitor would say), it is the fiends who write the articles, or at best the Machiavelian politicians who write them, that confound our judgment.

Not a bit; the people who write the leaders are, as a rule, tired men without opinions, living precariously and, nowadays at least, underpaid. The people who send the telegrams from abroad send what they think the paper wants and even then often find it suppressed or changed in the office. For instance, consider the case of the *Times* newspaper and of the Catholic Church in France. The *Times* newspaper had for its proprietors—its nominal proprietors at least—a worthy family of English gentlemen. For its editor another worthy English gentleman. Its correspondent in Paris was an old Jew of the name of Opper, a very hard worker, cunning and utterly without principles; he went about under an alias or a false name of a grandiloquent sort copied from the European aristocracy and called himself De Blowitz. He was naturally a little weak where the Catholic Church was concerned, but still his main motive was certainly to keep his well-paid post and to please his paper. When he died, [redacted]. The anti-Christian venom continued its stream. All the main facts in favour of the Catholic Church were suppressed; everything that could hurt the French hierarchy in their great struggle was emphasised. [redacted]

Now why is all this? It does not lie in the proprietors, it would seem, nor in the editors, nor in the writers; then where does it lie?

It lies in one of those mutual reactions of which history is full, and for which the theory of the dynamo affords an excellent metaphor.

When the armature of a dynamo begins to revolve, the slight residuary magnetism in the poles of its magnet is sufficient to excite in the coils of wire a feeble current. This current in its turn increases the strength of the magnetic force, the revolutions of the armature therefore yield a stronger current, and each goes on exciting the other until a certain maximum intensity is reached and a flood of electric power is pouring from the terminals.

So it is with the press. There must indeed be present a certain faint tendency at the beginning of its process; the press could not, even were it deliberate, make a commercial nation agricultural, for instance; nor make a cowardly nation go to war against some Power which it knew very well to be strong. But the press can wholly change the *pitch* of emotion; and it does so, not by a deliberate scheme, but by the interplay of a demand for that emotion and an increasing satisfaction of

it. In the process of arousing such emotions it becomes evident that they can be used; and then it is that, as a secondary force, intention comes in and public opinion is regularly canalised.

This explains why the force so used is almost universally evil in its objects, for the opportunity to canalise opinion already aroused will hardly be used save to gratify some purpose of avarice or terror. The man who has a nobler motive than fear or greed is far more direct in his operations. *He* would attempt, if he used sources of information at all, to arouse emotion directly in the minds of dormant or indifferent men, and for this the press is almost useless: it can only work by a process of suggestion, at first slow, and later self-exciting into violence. It is always an intrigue, and for intrigue the forces of justice and of honesty are ill-suited.

What is the remedy for this state of things?

Here we are, packed into great towns, with no external objects sufficient to move us or interest us, dependent for the subjects of our interest upon matters more or less remote from our lives, and supplied as to our information upon those matters by some few men who control a certain machinery, to wit the press, which of its nature gravely and continually tends to suffer from the vices I have described.

What is the remedy?

As I have said above, the first appeal is to legislation. But legislation, however thoroughly one knows one's subject, does nor here apply.

Mr. Chesterton has suggested with great force two remedies: first, that all public writing should be signed; secondly, that the publisher of any falsehood detrimental to the common weal should be prosecuted and punished, and upon him should lie the burden of proving he believed the falsehood to be true.

As to the first of these remedies, it concerns custom rather than law. As to the second, it is already in the hands of the State in this country, if the State choose to exercise its power. For it is the mark of an oligarchy that the judiciary and the executive are not so much closely dependent upon one another as identical. But no executive, least of all the executive of a plutocratic oligarchy, will attack a wide, a powerful and a long-standing cancer in the State.

Very well then, what is the remedy?

Most men of education would say: "*Time*. One shock and then another wakes people up; and the press will end in the same contempt here as it is approaching in other countries."

The answer is insufficient. Great danger or quite unexpected

disaster does wake up the most lethargic community; and if any of my readers will be at the pains of going to the British Museum and of reading the papers for December 1899, when there was no disaster worth calling disaster and no national peril whatever, but only the necessity for a little unusual effort—they will understand what I mean. But no correction, short of national ruin, suffices to correct universal maladies. All history is there to prove it. After an invasion, or after the loss of a fleet, we might treat our press as the French treat theirs—but it is a big material price to pay for a purely moral advantage. And even after the paying of that price the evil is not thoroughly remedied. Nations which have had the sharpest lessons continue to be influenced in the manner I here criticise: not wholly influenced as we are, but still partially influenced. No; we cannot rely upon the effect of accident all the time. The circle through which spreads a knowledge of the evil from which we suffer increases, but it can never embrace even the major part of the community.

Well then, what is the remedy?

The general remedy of course, in this as in every other similar matter, is a change of philosophy; a change in the mind of the whole people. It is a recognition of this truth which has made every religious movement in history. You must produce (in this case) a public philosophy which will strike at the core of the thing; an attitude of mind which mistrusts secrecy above all things, and would actively punish, in some social way, every alias and every anonymity, and which would punish legally the assumption of a false name or the entry into a secret society; an attitude which presupposes of great wealth organically used, a mixture of evil and of stupidity; an attitude which shall suspect a statement the more the oftener it hears it merely reiterated and the oftener it finds its informer avoiding evidence. Such a philosophy exists: it is not that of our world; it was that of an earlier time; but to reproduce it to-day and in this country nothing but a religious revolution would suffice. We have come to live by secrecy and hold it necessary and right.

The only remaining remedy is for every man who has the welfare of his time at heart, and whose opportunities have permitted him to appreciate the vileness of the thing, to attack it (at whatever cost) by word of mouth, in print—when he can get men brave enough to print him—and by his action in challenging and exposing particular men. If a man, however convinced, confine himself to general terms in such a warfare, he is useless and probably a coward. He must not say "*The Times*," he

must say "[redacted]." He must not say "Reuter," he must give the name of the particular fellow who sent the particular lie. He must not say "*The* [redacted]," "*The* [redacted]," "*The* [redacted]," "*The* [redacted]"—he must say "Mr. [redacted]"; or if he says "[redacted]," he must [redacted]

He must not talk of the "evils of the opium trade," he must rather mention by name the firms which are engaged in that traffic. He must not be content to show that the Congo Reform business is a bit of cant and hypocrisy; he must get hold of the names of the people who found the money; he must get hold of the facts in the past careers of those who made the agitation, and he must hold them ready to publish. He must in everything make it his business to destroy secrecy, by question, by affirmation, and by a sudden presentation of unexpected and sometimes apparently irrelevant truths until he has his reward.

The more men around him are acting in that fashion the sooner that reward will come.

[Note.—This article by Mr. Belloc, which we print after submitting it to a censorship mindful of the Law of Libel, contained certain accusations against certain public persons—accusations which we believe to be true. Mr. Belloc was exceedingly unwilling that we should publish his article without these accusations, and in order to prove that he at least has the courage of his convictions we have adopted the form in which the article at present appears. We do this the more willingly since it demonstrates how in this country the Law of Libel aids that very obscuring of facts to which Mr. Belloc refers—that obscuring of facts which is one of the most serious of modern tendencies.—Ed. E.R.]

II. THE HOMELESSNESS OF JONES

By G. K. Chesterton

It is very odd that any one should ever have specially said that an Englishman's house is his castle. For the truth is that an Englishman is almost the only man in Europe whose house is not his castle; it is merely a fort of which he is put in charge by the lord whose vassal he is. The French peasant's house is really his castle; though it is by no means a romantic castle. The Russian peasant's house is practically his castle; though it is sometimes a castle sacked by tyrannic raids. The Spanish peasant's house is his castle; and is by no means a castle in Spain. Even an Irish peasant's house (under recent and just legislation) is often his castle, if it be only a castle of mud. The one person who, even when he gains profit or security from a house, cannot, as a rule, claim this defiant and chivalric possession of it, is the Englishman. The French or Irish peasant might actually put battlements and a drawbridge on to his cottage if he chose; the Irishman would not do it because he is troubled with a sense of humour; the Frenchman would not do it because it would cost money. But they might if they liked; because they now, nearly all of them, own their own houses. But if the average Englishman tried furtively to stick on battlements or to rig up a drawbridge in the night, he would find his landlord inaccessible to their romantic outline; and even talking in a dreary way about depreciating the property. The average British citizen does not possess his house; the common Englishman cannot play the fool with his house; however much he may play the fool in it.

The Englishman has not a house, let alone a castle; the only question that follows is, does he want one? And the answer is most certainly yes. The common Englishman, if he were making the world to suit himself, would certainly give himself a personal building and habitation standing separate upon a square of earth. In short, he wants a private house, a really private house. I concede at once with enthusiasm that he also wants a public house. I agree that he enjoys all the things that collectivism can give, the public park, the public library, the National Gallery. But no one wants to sleep in the National Gallery. Along with this idea of privacy goes the idea of property; a man cannot really lie down and rest except on six

foot of ground to which he has a right. It is useless to discuss this ; it is delicate, because it is deep. You can call the sentiment of ownership mystical, if you call the fear of death mystical, or the desire of progeny mystical. All we can say is that if we dig to the bottom of our brains these things are there. The sense of property, for instance, is one of the very first things which children feel to be just. A baby of three can appreciate the ultimate idea that a thing can be sacred to a person and inseparable from him. It may be said that this moral idea they receive from their elders. Perhaps ; but the interesting thing is that this moral idea they receive with rapture. They throw themselves into it with an enthusiasm which they do not show for many of the other most important didactic ideals. We find none of that difficulty here which really embarrasses us in explaining to children the social utility of truth or its complicated limitation by courtesy. *Meum* and *Tuum* are to a child as plain as pancakes ; he feels that the person can own objects. But if we tried to put it by saying that the animate merely rules the inanimate, even that would not be quite right. Children (and grown-up people too) have in their ownership an obscure idea even of loyalty to the thing. A little boy who has gone to bed without his toy gun does not only feel that he is sad without the gun. He also feels that in some transcendental way the gun will be sad without him. And it is no good calling this fetish-worship and saying that the boy believes the gun to be alive ; the boy is not such a fool. He has simply a vague idea that he has left a part of himself somewhere and that part is not doing itself justice. But if any one calls it fetish-worship, it is sufficient to answer that the thing is quite as plain in adults as in infants. The ordinary grown man has a notion of something which is in some dark way due even to the dead things which he owns. He says, "I owe it to my own roof." He says, "I would not pollute my sword." He talks of the honour of a rock or the reputation of a meadow. But above all he feels it about the holy box in which he lives. Even when he is boasting of his living blood and progeny, he actually prefers to refer to it in terms of bricks and mortar. His proudest name for the Jones family is "The House of Jones."

Now you may say that Jones, the average Englishman, can never get back that plain possession of a plain home. You may say (with some historical plausibility) that he never had it. Certainly he never had it perfectly or for any considerable period ; his ownership was always hampered and very frequently disturbed. It would be a tolerable proposition that the Englishman has

never owned. But if you fancy that a man cannot bewail the loss of something that he has never had, then you have not begun to be human, or even alive. That is the first and most fascinating difference between man and the beasts, that man is mourning for something which has never been in history, is always remembering something that is not in his experience. If I printed in large letters on a book cover "The Horse without Horns" you would think it an unreasonable expression. If I were to write as a headline "The Fish who lost his Legs" you would consider the phrase for some time with a knitted brow. At last you would point out that no horses have horns and no fishes have legs; so fearlessly do you face the last discoveries of science. But you would not think it odd if I called a book "The Man who lost his Innocence," though, in truth, no men have been innocent in all human history. You would not think it strange to say "The Restless Man," though, indeed, none of our race have ever really rested on this earth. In the same way it is not unnatural to say of a man that he is specially "The Homeless Man"; and it is true to say it of my friend Mr. Jones, the Englishman.

Now we will say that Jones was just about to move with his wife and baby into his little villa, when something suddenly went wrong with the drains; or some rich creditor foreclosed upon the property; or for some other reason he was abruptly kept out of what he already regarded as his own. I can imagine some fine writer who could combine realism with the fantastic, some writer like Mr. H. G. Wells composing a wild and yet most human romance about it. Jones circles hopelessly round his lost house in a nomadic state all his life, going first into the street, then into poor lodgings, then to a too-expensive hotel, then to a middling boarding-house, then to a Rowton House, then to a workhouse; but never losing hope and always expecting to get his luggage into his own home at last. So far the story would be only made out of that plain poetry which is the stuff of our daily life. But the element of the fantastic (and also of the allegorical) would enter into the story through this very odd circumstance; that at every stage of that weary and disjointed waiting, people assured Jones that his uncomfortable and temporary condition was really much better than the home life he was trying to get. When first he was flung out of his new house and had to picnic anyhow in the front garden, the passers-by paused and assured him with public benevolence that he was now back in the splendid struggle with Nature out of which all energies arose. When he paid rent to a savage and miserly land-

lady, he was informed that this keen economic competition between the landlady and himself was the origin of all national wealth. When he went to the boarding-house he was told that in that place the higher vision of brotherhood and sisterhood had superseded the extinct cultus of the family. When he went to the expensive hotel he was told to admire the march of science; and asked if he expected to have fifteen telephones in the hut which he so weakly regretted. And when he went ultimately to the workhouse, was fed by the parish on cocoa and worked for the parish under the threat of flogging, then he was finally assured that he had entered that Socialist state which is the solution of human evils; in which the Social Organism is the only truly living thing. And yet, such is the old-world obstinacy of the Joneses, they still want to get back to their own house.

This is not a farce but a very fair statement of the actual history of the Englishman, especially the English peasant—or what ought to have been the English peasant. His history has been one permanent *pis aller*. And worst of all it has been a *pis aller* offered as perfection. His fate has always been a second best which some fashionable craze assured him was a first best. He was assured that every dreary lodging or desolate club he entered was better than that impossible private house. Age after age the colleges and the instructed classes tried to get the Englishman to be a "contented" and do his duty in that state of life into which it had pleased them to kick him. Age after age they tried (with a tired amiability) not to get Jones what he wanted, but to get Jones to want what he had got. We need not carry too far back this rough historical summary.

For our purpose we may roughly leave out of account the small pagan cities or the clear mediæval theory, in which property had a principle right or wrong; the period of which I am talking begins with the rise of modern civilisation. It begins at the Renaissance, that fountain of inspiration and expansion, that fountain of complexity and crime; and in England it begins about the time when William Shakespeare had discovered how to write romantic tragedies and Sir John Hawkins had discovered how to steal niggers.

From that time onward, through the seventeenth century especially and largely through the eighteenth, the real growth in England was the growth of the great landowners. England became decidedly, and as some think incurably, an aristocracy; and undoubtedly produced many great gentlemen who gave glory to their country. But their basis was their territorial wealth. Modern romantic writers are never tired of telling us

that being an aristocrat and a gentleman does not depend upon money. But it does ; it does quite decisively if we are talking about a whole aristocracy. A lord may be poor, just as a money-lender may go bankrupt. But the primary essence of being a money-lender is having money to lend. And the primary essence of being a lord is being a landlord. I need not retell the tale which is now being slowly and reluctantly told by everybody of the bland and brutal campaign of annexation which for two centuries the English aristocracy waged against the English people, the impudence of illegal fences and the worse impudence of legal ingenuity. The decisions of a thousand J.P.s have been gibbeted in one good English rhyme :

> You prosecute the man or woman,
> Who steals the goose from off the common ;
> But leave the larger felon loose
> Who steals the common from the goose.

But indeed it is not our point to expatiate on this. Our point is that something soothed the English peasantry into a strange submission to their own enslavement. If the great lords stole the common from the goose, he was surely a great goose to stand it. Why did he stand it ? He stood it because he was even then told that his despoilers stood for Progress, for patriotic efficiency and for a new order of things. Especially their squires claimed to stand for Protestant England against the Pope, and for Parliament against the King. They consented to be squire-ridden in order not to be priest-ridden ; and the " House of Commons " came at last to be a final substitute for every commoner having a house. " How much better," they were told, " to follow the young squire in his protest against Popery and the poisonous Stuarts, than to have a mere private house."

The two great movements that have happened since the Reformation can best be defined as the solemn sanctification of two cardinal sins. The aristocratic movement ultimately amounted to the declaration that pride is not a sin. The Manchester or Commercial movement which followed it amounted to the assertion that avarice is not a sin. It is in this dogma alone that the industrial movement differed from mankind. A French peasant may grab at gold as much as a Birmingham merchant. But when the French peasant wants to worship a saint he does not worship a man who grabbed at gold, but one who flung it away. But the industrial philosophy admired money-grubbing as well as practising it ; it called the thing " enterprise " and " self-help." Nations not filled with smoke

and certain chemical smells it described as nations in decay. Its offer to the labourers (who ought to have been the peasants) was simply the discipline of hunger and hatred with the chance of being Lord Mayor. All that the Manchester plutocrat did for the Manchester workers (as far as I can make out) was to bang them again and again on the head ; and then to look at them admiringly and call them "hard-headed." And if again at this stage the dishoused Jones began to mention a house, he was at once answered, "Is it not better to have even a millionth chance of that marvellous house which Arkwright built than to have a mere private house."

There was a reaction against the Manchester School, especially in its foreign policy ; but it did nothing towards getting Jones nearer to his own house. On the contrary, it wanted him to go further away from it. It wanted him to see his real happiness, which was to "colonise." For some time back it had been convenient, for one reason or another, at some periods through over-population, at all periods through territorial tyranny, to send some of our sons to remote continents, especially our prodigal sons. These colonies had also been used as mere rubbish-heaps into which to shoot criminals ; but I do not insist upon this idea. As a matter of private conviction I may say that I am sure that something could be done with the man who went to Australia in chains. My difficulty would rather be, what can be done with the man who went to Australia from preference? But this is personal; and not the point. The point is that in this overflow of our population (as accidental as a pot boiling over) the businesslike aristocracy perceived another opportunity of diverting Jones from his foolish original dream. Let him go out and annex the universe ; then he would not annex his own house, which was perhaps situated too near to Chatsworth. "Go forth, heroic Jones," cried the landlords reverently, "that little log hut that you will build in the wilds will be far more glorious than any mere private house."

Imperialism in its turn is dying ; but the force which threatens to take its place is like all the rest in this, that it has no good word for Jones' house into which he planned to bring his wife and child long ago. Socialism and the Manchester School are very nearly the same. They are identical in their fundamental conception of daily life. Both imagine that the mass of the people must be submissive wage-earners. Only the Manchester individualist told them to submit to inhuman selfishness ; while the Socialist seems to think that they will submit to an inhuman idealism. Both, in short, regard the normal man as an employé.

Both forget that over half the planet the average man is an employer ; a proud and exacting employer who employs himself. Under Manchester conditions, for instance, Jones has become separated from his wife, for whom he had largely planned the house. She had looked forward perhaps to making the inside of that house her own, to exercising that omnipotence on a small scale which was her privilege against the masculine power on a larger scale. But under the nightmare of Manchester, she has to go and turn a handle that makes cotton while her husband turns another handle that makes jam, neither of them caring in the least whether it makes green fire or crocodiles. Does the Socialist propose to alter this sexual separation or this unmeaning toil ? Not at all. The Socialist only says, " Think, my dear Jones, how much better it will be when your wife is a separate citizen like yourself, has a vote and a fixed rate of wages ; how much finer that will be than that obstinate fancy of yours about a Private House, which really . . ."

I daresay Jones will submit to this as he has submitted to all the other side-packings of his old and simple desire. The rich kept his house to protect it against Popery, they kept it to employ it for economic progress, they kept it to give him a chance in Tasmania, and they may perhaps continue to keep it in order to construct a collectivist society. Jones, who has asked for so little and has been offered so much, who has been offered a new world when he only wanted a very small piece of the old, will perhaps continue to wander hopelessly round the little house he wanted and find all the roads up ; and the little lanterns burning on the barricades like the burning swords that prevent a return to Paradise. When Socialism has been succeeded by some other fad of the universities, I suppose Jones will still be hanging about, wondering when he will be allowed to finish his honeymoon.

III. THE RUSSIAN SPY SYSTEM

The Azeff Scandals in Russia

By D. S.

An old friend of mine, a most honoured leader of the Social Revolutionary Party, who has passed seventeen years of his life in Russian prisons and in exile, came one day to my house with two Russians, and introduced them to me.

"Ivan Nicholaevitch. Pavel Ivanovitch."

We shook hands and I regarded my new acquaintances. Pavel Ivanovitch provoked little curiosity in me. He was an ordinary type of the Russian "intellectual," with the face of an ascetic, bearing the traces of deep thought and many privations. The other was of an entirely different type, and during our conversation I observed his face intently.

"Why do you look at me like that?" he asked me at last, laughingly, with no sign of discomposure.

"I am thinking," I answered, also smiling, "what luck it is for a conspirator to have a face like yours. I should never take you for a revolutionist. You are a typical stockbroker, or bookmaker."

I had been warned by my friend that both these gentlemen were terrorists of the deepest dye. But while Pavel Ivanovitch in every movement betrayed the conspirator, I could find in Ivan Nicholaevitch not the slightest trace of the man who stakes his life for his ideals. His stout, well-nourished, well-clad figure, short neck, and broad round face with its very thick and sensual lips, flat nose and carefully cropped hair was of that international type of professional financier you can meet upon every Stock Exchange in Europe. I tried in vain to find in his eyes that expression of *Welt Schmerz* so characteristic of the Russian idealist. They bore no expression at all. Protrudant, dark, filmy, they reflected as little of his mind as those of a fish. And yet his narrow, low forehead and heavy jaws showed great strength of will and resolution as well as insatiable instincts.

"Ivan Nicholaevitch" was the assumed name of this man, known only to a few picked and trusted people. His real name came prominently before the world a few weeks ago. He was Eugene Phillipovitch Azeff, the great *agent provocateur*, the pillar for many years of the Russian despotic rule, and at the

same time one of the most trusted leaders of the bitterest enemy of that despotism, the Social Revolutionary Party.

Azeff's career was astonishing and unique. There are men who, through a spirit of adventure or ambition, have participated in revolutionary activity ; and who, later on, when imprisoned and threatened with dire penalties, have become traitors to the cause, and even *agents provocateurs*, to buy their freedom. Others there are who track revolutionists in the capacity of spies or *provocateurs* through sheer incapacity to earn a living by some honest profession. Azeff did not belong to either of these categories. He was, so to say, born a traitor, ready furnished with the most precious and essential qualifications of a traitor. The son of a tailor, he was in the habit of inciting his school-fellows in Rostoff-na-Donu to acts of insubordination in order to denounce them to the teachers. When a youth of twenty he carefully weighed the chances of various careers in Russia and chose that for which his nature was best fitted, and which justly seemed to him the most promising in Russia—that of *agent provocateur*. He stole a few hundred pounds from his employer, forged the necessary diplomas for himself and went to Germany, where he entered a polytechnic as a student of engineering and electricity. It was there that he learnt, *au fond*, the art of making bombs and obtained the grade of a scientific engineer. It was in Germany that Azeff first joined a Russian revolutionary circle in which he soon managed to attain a prominent reputation. Azeff was not an orator, still less a writer or theorist. In fact, only with the greatest difficulty could he explain the course of his ideas upon paper. He spoke little, but his rare words were measured and to the point, therefore always of weight. Having finally decided the question of his career he became, *par excellence*, a practical business man, with a keen knowledge of human nature, indomitable persistence and will, and a rare gift of organisation. Supplied with good references by his comrades he went to Moscow and there joined the Social Revolutionists. He was then already in close touch with Ratchkovsky, the omnipotent chief of the foreign service of the Russian political police. Supplied with plenty of money by Ratchkovsky and ensured by him from arrest, Azeff, with the late Gershuni, a revolutionist of the highest moral and intellectual standard, visited the chief revolutionary centres in Russia and abroad, and in 1902 they succeeded in uniting the various local groups of the Social Revolutionists into one strong and well-organised body, which since then has carried on a dramatic and relentless struggle against Russian despotism. During the last

seven years of this struggle Azeff used intermittently the Social Revolutionary party and the political police as tools for the promotion of one end—his own career. From 1901 till the very end of 1908 Azeff took an active, often a leading, part in every scheme of the party. It would be erroneous to maintain that the Social Revolutionary party without Azeff would never have come into prominence and achieved what it has achieved. Among the many thousands of its members can be found idealists ready for superhuman efforts of self-abnegation and sacrifice, and even now, after all the imprisonments and executions, there are plenty of leaders of the highest moral and mental capacities. Yet Azeff contributed greatly to its success. He perhaps beat the record in the slaying of tyrants. He was one of the leading organisers of the murders of Sipiagin, Bogdanovitch, Plehve, the Grand Duke Sergius and of many others killed during those seven years. And for the last five years Azeff was actually the head of that terrible "Fighting Organisation" (*Bocvaya Organisatsia*) which for a whole decade held the Tsar and his camarilla in awe and practical captivity. His nearest revolutionary comrades, who alone knew of his activity and who repeatedly followed him into battle, cherished towards him a deep affection and boundless confidence. How could they do otherwise, when he showed such marvellous ingenuity in the formation and execution of revolutionary projects? He had the knack of illuminating his repulsive countenance with a strangely attractive fire when anxious to convince or to impress, and his manners were so frank and simple that not only mere comradeship but real friendship bound them to him. In Paris and in Italy, where he passed a great part of his time with his wife and children, he lived simply and modestly and was known as an exemplary husband and father. Azeff, who brought death upon so many youths and young girls, was himself a great lover of children.

Such was Azeff as known until last month to his revolutionary friends. And when irrefutable proofs of his treachery were brought forward, the members of the Central Committee could not believe their senses. He disappeared; yet his wife, herself a faithful revolutionist, continued to believe in his innocence. Only when the late director of the Department of Police, Lopukhine, was thrown into prison by the Russian Government for revealing the traitorous *rôle* of Azeff the truth convinced them, and they were filled with indescribable horror.

The Central Committee of the Social Revolutionary party is in possession of a document proving that in 1902, Ratchkovsky,

the head of the foreign service of Russian political police, wrote to the Department of Police asking for 500 roubles which his secret agent, "a friend of Gershuni," must "subscribe to the funds of the Social Revolutionary party." The famous Minister, Durnovo, in answer requested that the agent in question should present himself to him, personally. The agent therefore visited Durnovo. It was Eugene Azeff. At the request of Durnovo he delivered to him the names of the members of the Central Committee of the party. Other documents prove that Azeff at about the same time betrayed a secret printing establishment of the party in Penza, and many arrests were made. He invented and realised a scheme of smuggling the literature of the party into Russia in refrigerators of foreign make. And when this ingenious plan began to work successfully he denounced it to the police and many of the party perished. In the beginning of 1904 a circle of revolutionists, led by a young girl, Sophia Klichoglu, elaborated a plan for the murder of the then Dictator of Russia, Plehve. This group worked independently of the "Fighting Organisation" of which Azeff was the head. Azeff gave away the organisers of the attempt and they were all arrested and perished. A few months later Azeff himself elaborated a scheme for the blowing up of Plehve by bombs. And though it is now certain that some at least of the heads of the secret police knew of the conspiracy, Plehve was actually killed, and apart from the two bomb-throwers, Sasonoff and Sikorsky, who were taken on the spot, the participants in the plot escaped and are safe at this moment, though since then they have repeatedly visited Russia.

A year before that, a letter had been received by the party in which Azeff was denounced as a traitor. The party, because of the seeming absurdity of the accusations, readily accepted Azeff's hint that it had probably come from the secret police, who, unable to capture him, desired to discredit him. The subsequent murder of Plehve, which filled the whole of Russia with joy and hope and cast confusion into Court circles, increased tenfold Azeff's prestige and the party's confidence in him.

A few months later the Tsar's favourite uncle, the Grand Duke Sergius, was killed by a bomb in broad daylight. In this affair too, Azeff, as the head of the "Fighting Organisation," played a leading *rôle*.

Immediately after the murder of Plehve, Azeff busied himselt in sending denunciations to the police. He betrayed Prince Hilkof, the friend of Tolstoy, and several other revolutionists with whom he was upon the most friendly terms. As a repre-

sentative of the Social Revolutionists he took part in a conference of all the opposition parties held in Paris in 1904, and immediately sent to the then director of police, Lopukhine, the full report of the conference which had been entrusted to him for transmission to his party. He then returned to Russia, and there, guarded by agents of the secret police, travelled from town to town, participating in various revolutionary conferences. Then followed numerous attempts, mostly unsuccessful, at the murder of high officials. In Petersburg an attempt was planned against General Trepoff, the bodyguard of the Tsar. This was extremely clumsily organised and was denounced by Azeff, who took no direct part in it, and ten persons, among them seven women, one being a niece of Trepoff himself, were arrested and tried. Several attempts were planned against General Dubassoff. They all failed, though in the last attempt, directed by Azeff personally, Dubassoff's lieutenant was killed. An unsuccessful attempt against Stolypine in May 1906 was also organised by Azeff. He then left Russia and declared to his committee in Paris that bombs had ceased to be reliable weapons, and that new methods must be tried. He maintained that these new weapons could be nothing but dirigible aeroplanes, from which bombs, filled with a new explosive of terrific force, could be hurled down upon the Tsar's palace and the governmental buildings, to wipe out the very nucleus of the hitherto invincible despotism.

Meanwhile, in August 1905, one of the members of the St. Petersburg Committee of the party received an anonymous letter in which a certain "Asyef" and a former exile with the initial "T" were denounced as betraying the party to the police. The author of this letter, as I learn now from private sources, was a colonel of Gendarmes who bore a personal grudge against Ratchkovsky, who, thanks to Azeff's denunciations, enjoyed the greatest confidence at the Court. It happened that when the letter arrived, Azeff himself was in the room, together with the addressee, a doctor, and his wife. The doctor opened the letter and began to read it aloud. He did not know the real name of his dear and trusted guest, "Ivan Nicholaevitch." When he finished reading the letter he remarked musingly :

"I wonder who this Asyef can be."

"I am Azeff," declared Ivan Nicholaevitch.

The others looked at him in astonishment ! His face was deadly pale and distorted. The doctor and his wife embraced him, and with the greatest emotion endeavoured to console him.

"Dear friend," they said, "don't be upset by these disgusting calumnies. They are the work of spies."

But Azeff said firmly:

"When such a letter comes, however trusted may be the person it accuses, it is the duty of the party to make a thorough inquiry."

An inquiry was accordingly made; and a secret tribunal of the party sat to try the case. Azeff furnished proofs that "T," who appeared to be Tatarov, had really upon several occasions betrayed revolutionists. And in the end the trial was that of Tatarov, and not Azeff, who was among the judges. In vain Tatarov asserted that he was only the subordinate agent; that the real great traitor was Azeff himself. The judges scorned these "ridiculous libels." Azeff, the fearless organiser of the murder of Plehve, the greatest of Russian tyrants! Azeff, the "eagle" who had slain the Grand Duke Sergius, Bogdanovitch and so many others! He was like the wife of Cæsar—above suspicion. Tatarov was condemned to death by the tribunal, Azeff himself being the first to sign the death-warrant, and the arranger of the execution. One of the nearest friends of Azeff who had taken part in all his great assassinations, a fearless revolutionist was sent by Azeff to Warsaw, called at Tatarov's rooms and there stabbed him to death. The whereabouts of Tatarov were revealed to Azeff by his chief, Ratchkovsky, the head of the secret police, who was probably only too glad to sacrifice the smaller fry in order to preserve Azeff.

A year later Azeff in a similar manner "removed" a man of far higher importance than himself—the famous "revolutionary pope," Father Gapon.

The world still remembers how the people of St. Petersburg were met on "Bloody Sunday" when, led by Gapon, they went to the Winter Palace to present their monster petition for mercy to the Tsar—Little Father. Thousands were shot by the troops, and Gapon escaped with his life only thanks to an admirer of his, a certain engineer, Rutenberg.

Gapon fled abroad burning with hatred towards the "venomous brood" the Tsar and his family, as he called them in a subsequent proclamation. Though he had formerly worked among the working classes under the patronage of the police he was at this time undoubtedly and absolutely sincere. He joined first the Social Democratic party, and afterwards the Social Revolutionists in order to organise an armed insurrection in St. Petersburg. But he soon had to leave both these parties as he could not work on equal terms with other leaders, himself

being of an autocratic disposition. He then decided to organise a party of his own, to consist of the working classes with himself as sole leader of unlimited powers. Arms were necessary to start an insurrection in St. Petersburg. A little group, not belonging to the Social Revolutionary Party, was just then engaged on the Continent in arming the celebrated gun-runner, the *John Grafton*. With astonishing skill, energy and resourcefulness this leader armed the *John Grafton* with 17,000 Swiss military rifles, several thousand revolvers of the British military pattern, several tons of explosives, three machine guns, a great quantity of Mausers, &c. Azeff, of course, was in the secret and warmly supported the scheme. The gun-runner, according to the plan, was to rush the port of St. Petersburg, to be met there by a few hundred armed workmen, who would overcome the resistance of the police, seize the *John Grafton*, and arm the picked crowd which would immediately gather upon the banks of the Neva. It was, however, necessary to assure the presence of a leader whom the population of St. Petersburg would obey. The Social Revolutionists knew that this leader could be none other than Father Gapon. An offer was therefore made with the approval of Azeff that Gapon should prepare beforehand the necessary body of reliable armed workmen in St. Petersburg and should himself sail upon the *John Grafton* to lead the people. Gapon readily agreed, stipulating only that some concrete plan of action should be drawn up for him. This was done, and Gapon approved it.

I am not at liberty now to publish this document. Azeff, as I have said, was in the secret. The Central Committee of the Social Revolutionary party publicly admitted the fact of Azeff's participation in the *John Grafton* affair. Whether he informed Ratchkovsky of all the details of the conspiracy will probably never be known. The fact remains that the gun-runner safely arrived in Finnish waters and would probably have made its way to St. Petersburg had not a storm arisen and wrecked it. The ship perished with some of its cargo ; but the Finnish fishermen picked out of the water a great many cases in which were arms, hermetically enclosed, so that thousands of Finns became possessed of excellent rifles. This fact, which in a greatly exaggerated form became known to the Russian Government, caused the Tsar, in November 1905, to grant to Finland all the concessions demanded, for fear of an effective insurrection. Gapon saved his life by swimming, and after a short stay in Finland returned abroad again.

At that time political events in Russia began to develope

with such lightning rapidity that Gapon, Azeff and even the revolutionary parties were left behind. The whole country had turned against the Government, and several million workmen arranged a general strike. The October Manifesto followed, together with the sanguinary *pogroms* arranged by Trepoff and the "Black Hundred." Witte was then Premier.

Gapon's decline then began. He was temporarily carried away by his pleasures of lay life, and gradually became estranged from the revolutionists, who lost every confidence in him.

He eventually returned to Russia, and entered into communication with Witte and Ratchkovsky, receiving from the first 30,000 roubles for the reorganisation of his former workmen's unions to be carried on again as before, under the secret patronage of the police, and being strongly urged by Ratchkovsky to betray the leaders of the Social Revolutionists.

I doubt whether he really betrayed any one. He probably began once more his double game between workmen and police which he had played so successfully before the events of "Bloody Sunday." He wrote me a letter in which he said, "My heart is breaking at the thought that you may believe the libels which my enemies spread about me. I implore you to believe that whatever may happen I care for nothing save the welfare of the people."

A few weeks after that, on March 28, 1906, he was hanged in an empty house near St. Petersburg, which belonged to a former police official. He had evidently been overcome after a violent struggle. His body was found only four weeks later. This mysterious death has never before been truly explained, and I will give the story of it here. Gapon's death was due to Azeff, who, learning of Gapon's relations with Ratchkovsky, feared that he might become a dangerous rival and still more that he might get wind of his, Azeff's, own *rôle*. Two things were of immense importance to Azeff, one being that the confidence reposed in him by the Social Revolutionists should be in no way weakened, and another that he should remain of first importance in the eyes of Ratchkovsky. These two premises being assured his position in the world of conspiracy was practically omnipotent, and, needless to add, eminently lucrative. He had been informed by Ratchkovsky that Gapon had agreed to betray him, Azeff, and another leader of the Social Revolutionists for a large sum of money. Acting on the strength of this, in the spring of 1906 he prepared a fictitious plan and proposed it to the party. Informing the party that he had heard that Gapon had promised to betray him and another to Ratchkovsky, he proposed to the

party that Ratchkovsky should be murdered. His real object was to rid himself of Gapon. But the suggestion to kill Ratchkovsky was of course calculated to strengthen his prestige with the Social Revolutionary party. In the meantime Gapon, with the object of keeping his promise to Ratchkovsky, had approached his old and formerly devoted friend, the engineer Rutenberg, offering him 50,000 roubles to help him in the betrayal of Azeff and the other leader. Gapon evidently believed that his personal influence with Rutenberg, coupled with the great devotion which the latter had formerly felt towards him, would overcome his loyalty to the Social Revolutionary party of which he was a member. Rutenberg, inwardly indignant, affected to agree, and, bearing in mind the proposal of Azeff to murder Ratchkovsky, suggested that the details of Azeff's betrayal should be arranged in the presence of Ratchkovsky. A meeting was therefore planned between Gapon, Rutenberg, and Ratchkovsky. Azeff thereupon proposed that at this meeting both Gapon and Ratchkovsky should be killed. But on the day of the meeting Ratchkovsky failed to keep the appointment, and Gapon alone fell into the trap. Upon Gapon's body was found a visiting-card of Ratchkovsky excusing himself for non-appearance. Needless to say, the whole thing had been previously arranged between Azeff and Ratchkovsky. Azeff's prestige in the party was in-increased both by his proposal to kill Ratchkovsky and by the latter's anxiety to apprehend him.

During the year 1906, Azeff worked hard for the police, obviously to improve his situation in the *Okhranka* (secret police), which, with the triumph of reaction, had again become omnipotent. He gave away a great number of revolutionists, among them, Stifftar, Gronsky, Lieutenant Nikitenko with his comrades who were supposed to be plotting against the Tsar, Karl Trauberg, and many others. There were absolutely no tangible proofs against them. But they were all court-martialled, hanged or shot at the bare word of Azeff. In February 1908, a little group of men and women were induced by Azeff to attempt the life of the Minister of Justice, Scheglovitoff. At the critical moment they were all taken with bombs or other weapons in their hands, tried, and hanged. A person who saw them a few hours before their execution told me that they had not the slightest notion of who had betrayed them.

But warnings of Azeff's *rôle* of *provocateur* became more and more frequent. They always came from agents of the *Okhranka* jealous of Azeff's influence, and therefore carried little weight with the party. Nevertheless, Azeff evidently began to think it

necessary to play a big trump to ensure his position in the party. He returned to St. Petersburg in February 1908, after a long stay in Paris, and began to prepare an attempt against the life of the Tsar. During previous years Azeff had always scornfully rejected any such suggestion. "It is impossible," he used to say, "the Tsar is inaccessible." He severely criticised every plan proposed by other members, and thanks to his great authority as the slayer of Plehve he always succeeded in defeating them. If one may believe the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, who seems at times to be inspired by Ratchkovsky, there was an understanding between Azeff and the *Okhranka* that whatever happened the Tsar's person was to be inviolate. Be that as it may, I have good reasons for maintaining that at this time Azeff found it feasible to attempt to do away with Nicholas II. Several attempts were arranged, and though they failed it was through no fault of Azeff. The police did not arrest the persons involved in these plots. The last attempt, of which Azeff had full knowledge, failed exclusively through want of firmness on the part of the person who was to be the actual perpetrator. Twice he had the Tsar entirely at his mercy, and twice his courage failed him.

Perhaps in time history will throw a thorough light upon the part played by Ratchkovsky in these latest attempts upon the life of the Tsar. I personally believe that Ratchkovsky was fully informed about them by Azeff, as he was in the case of the murder of Plehve. Ratchkovsky had been for the last two years practically the head of the secret police in charge of the Tsar's personal safety. Though officially he is only one of Stolypine's secretaries, he really occupies an entirely independent position, being responsible only to the Tsar, and having the right personally to control any political cases he may choose. Without Ratchkovsky the assassination of the Tsar could only have been unprofitable to Azeff, as Ratchkovsky, his patron, would have blamed him for allowing the party to have accomplished it. And only Ratchkovsky could have informed Azeff that there was a party at the Court which would not be displeased at such an event.

The relations between the Empress-Dowager, Maria Feodrovna, and the reigning Empress Alexandra Feodrovna are as far from being satisfactory as those between Nicholas II. and his younger brother, Michael. In old times Nicholas was the pet child of his mother, the Dowager-Empress, and her influence over him was supreme. But since his marriage she has gradually become estranged from him through the jealousy of the young

Empress, who could not stand the constant interference in her domestic affairs and her mother-in-law's power over her husband. Incessant friction between the two royal ladies ensued, which finally developed into open quarrels. And when the young Empress at last had the good fortune to give birth to an heir she definitely insisted upon the complete emancipation of Nicholas II. and the royal nursery from the tutelage of the Dowager-Empress. When, soon after that, Maria Feodrovna visited the St. Petersburg "College for the Daughters of Noblemen," which is under her patronage, she did not hesitate, in the presence of the young girls, bitterly to lament the fact that her daughter-in-law had forbidden her to play with her grandchildren.

In this way Maria Feodrovna gradually transferred her maternal affections from Nicholas II. to her youngest son, Michael. Her favour towards Michael and her grudge towards Nicholas were perhaps augmented by the exceedingly haughty manner in which Nicholas is wont to treat his younger brother. Though Nicholas II. is a narrow autocrat by heart and creed, and though he is not conspicuous for special gifts of intellect, appearance or personal charm, he is in many ways superior to his brother Michael, who is actually dull-witted and spiteful. The exalted position of Nicholas fills his brother's heart with jealousy he is not always able to conceal. Michael frequently criticises the Emperor's policy to the members of the Court, declaring that, were he in power, he would quickly apply such stringent measures as would stamp out the revolution for ever. This kind of thing agreeably tickles the extreme reactionaries at the Court, who know very well that, in case of the death of Nicholas II., the heir-presumptive being still an infant, Michael would become the Regent. And during his regency, who knows but what the infant heir-presumptive might fall ill and die, from diphtheria or some other childish ailment ?

So that there is a party at Court who would be highly content to see Michael in the place of his brother Nicholas. The reigning Empress knows this very well, and constantly trembles for the life of her little son, to such a degree that she has developed a veritable mania of persecution. Her fears were first aroused over three years ago through a sudden seizure of her son which really seemed to be of a suspicious character. During the last eighteen months she has suffered from several nervous breakdowns due to this constantly increasing fear.

Such is the position of affairs at the Court, well known to Ratchkovsky, who throughout his whole career has shown so great an inclination to fish in troubled waters.

Who can tell what might have been had Azeff continued in his double activity of terrorist and *agent provocateur*? The fact remains that at the end of last year, Burtzeff, the editor of an historical review, *Byloe*, succeeded in gathering such damning proofs of Azeff's treachery that the Central Committee of the party at last decided to address themselves to Lopukhine, a former director of the Department of Police, in whose service Azeff had been in the time of Plehve.

All doubts disappeared after the publication in the European press of a letter from Lopukhine to Stolypine. It runs as follows :

"On the evening of November 11, a certain Eugene Azeff presented himself at my house in the Tavricheskaya (St. Petersburg). I had known him in my capacity of Chief of Police as the special emissary of the police in Paris from May 1902 to January 1905.

"Azeff, who entered without being announced, told me that many members of the Social Revolutionary party to which he himself belonged had learnt that he was an agent of the secret police, and that a revolutionary tribunal was going to try him. He said that he knew this tribunal would apply to me for information concerning him, and that his life, in consequence, lay in my hands.

"To-day, General Guerasimoff, chief of the Petersburg *Okhranka*, presented himself to me, also without being announced, and told me that Azeff had asked him to question me as to what I should reply if the members of the revolutionary tribunal which is trying the case of Azeff should apply to me for information they require.

"General Guerasimoff added that he would learn all that took place in the presence of the tribunal, and also the names of the witnesses and the details of their evidence.

"Being convinced that the solicitations of Azeff and the assertion of the chief of the *Okhranka* that he will be fully informed of all that passes in the presence of the tribunal implies a direct menace to me, I consider it my duty to inform your Excellency of this fact, and to address you a respectful request to protect me against the importunities and the actions of the secret political police, actions which may perhaps threaten my personal safety."

When the news that the Central Committee of the party had publicly proclaimed Azeff, the murderer of Plehve, to be an *agent provocateur* reached the bureaucratic world in Russia it acted, according to the *Novoe Vremia*, like the explosion of a bomb in its midst. The Government lost its head. In the

space of four weeks the Government published four official communications upon the subject, each contradicting the other and all of a puzzling character.

One thing is obvious—that the Government has decided to hush up the Lopukhine-Azeff scandal, as it has hushed up so many others. For this end Lopukhine's house was suddenly invaded by thirty-five policemen all armed with bomb-proof shields. Lopukhine was imprisoned and his papers confiscated. Nothing will change except, perhaps, the names of some institutions. And when the storm has subsided the same Ratchkovsky will get a new Azeff, and the same venomous activity which poisons the life of the nation as well as threatening that of the Tsar will continue. How can the Government prevent the reappearance of an Azeff, when Azeff practically personifies the whole Governmental system of Russia ?

The desire to preserve the old *régime*, that of autocratic bureaucracy, oppresses every branch of the Governmental activity, legislative, judicial, administrative and military. Even upon the battle-field in Manchuria during the last war an *Okhranka* was established among the army with unlimited secret powers, under the direction of a colonel of Gendarmes, Vassileff, who was responsible, not to the field-marshal, or military authorities, but to his chief in St. Petersburg. I described the evils consequent upon this multiplied Government in my last article in The English Review of January. The Azeff scandal shows that this system is a standing danger even to the lives of the Ministers and the Tsar himself. Lopukhine might have saved the life of the Tsar by causing the fall of Azeff, but the *Okhranka* remains and in the course of time we shall certainly hear of some new and startling events. Azeff's case is not the first and will not be the last.

In the reign of Alexander II. the ill-famed Third Department existed, which worked in complete secrecy without being submitted to the regular Government, and the chief of which, called the Chief of Gendarmes, had direct admission to the Tsar's rooms. This institution, however, did not prevent the assassination of Alexander II. The new Emperor Alexander III. suppressed it, but only to create a similar institution under the name of the Department of Police, with its special branches of the secret police, or *Okhrankas*. Thus, side by side with the official Government, two secret governments began to act, each independently of the other. In the most secret document—the constitution of the *Okhranka* as established by Plehve—paragraphs 7 and 8 run as follows :

"The object of the *Okhranka* is especially, and first of all, the acquirement of 'interior agents,' *i.e.*, *agents provocateurs*, who must make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the revolutionary ideas and literature. Nobody but the chief must know these agents, and he must report them to the Department of Police, not by official reports but by private letters of which no copy must be kept."

It is clear, therefore, that any chief of the *Okhranka* is perfectly free to make any plots he likes, or to provoke any political crimes, nobody but himself and his agent being any the wiser.

During the first years of the reign of Alexander III., a certain Colonel Sudeykine was the chief of all the *Okhrankas*. He was a man who possessed marvellous capacities for the finding and educating of *agents provocateurs*. His ambition was great and he was absolutely unscrupulous. He succeeded in winning over an important revolutionist, Degayeff, a brilliant officer of the Artillery. Using him as a *provocateur*, Sudeykine succeeded in completely disorganising the then formidable "Party of the People's Will." He enjoyed an absolutely independent authority and unlimited pecuniary resources from the Government. But his ambitions went further, and he wished for an audience with the Tsar himself, thinking to be able to impose upon him and thus win more rapid distinction. But the higher bureaucrats Plehve, who was then director of the Department of Police, and Count Dimitri Tolstoy, then Minister of the Interior, were jealous of the successes of young Sudeykine, and opposed his advancement. They even feared to confer upon him the title of General which he coveted. He then worked up a plan of his own for gaining his ends. He wished, with the help of Degayeff, to organise a body of resolute terrorists whose existence should be kept a secret from the secret police. Then a fictitious attempt at the life of Sudeykine by Degayeff was to take place. Sudeykine would be slightly wounded and retire from the service. Then Degayeff, with the help of the terrorists before mentioned, was to assassinate the Minister of the Interior, the Grand Duke Vladimir and several smaller personages. This resurrection of terror would naturally strike awe into the heart of the Tsar, and he would thereupon recall Sudeykine, as the only possible saviour of Russia. Then Sudeykine would become Dictator of Russia with Degayeff as his immediate assistant. Such were the ambitious plans of this chief of the *Okhranka*. Unfortunately for Sudeykine, the revolutionists at this time became suspicious of Degayeff. The latter to escape the vendetta of the revolutionists killed Sudeykine

at their bidding, and finally retired to life-long exile in America. This combination of Sudeykine-Degayeff is repeated with somewhat greater success in the combination Azeff-Ratchkovsky.

Ratchkovsky began his career as a magistrate. But when he was twenty-seven, and Plehve became the director of the Department of Police, Ratchkovsky's name was already upon the list of the secret agents of the *Okhranka*. In 1890 we find him chief of the foreign service of the Russian secret police. His residence was in Paris and there he soon distinguished himself in the eyes of the Tsar. A secret agent of his, Gekelman, managed, under the assumed name of Landeysen, to win the confidence of Burtseff (the present revealer of the *rôle* of Azeff), joined the revolutionary circle of which Burtseff was one of the leaders, and induced the members of the circle to establish a secret factory of bombs, to be smuggled into Russia. The receipt of the explosives as well as the necessary funds were supplied to the circle by Landeysen. Ratchkovsky's spies, supported by the French detectives, were closely watching the apartments of the members of the circle, and on the very night a few bombs had been completed, the French police invaded the factory, seized the bombs and arrested every one except Landeysen, who suddenly disappeared. All the correspondence was seized and handed over to the Russian police. Many persons were arrested in Russia in connection with the affair. Alexander III. was delighted with the conduct of the French police upon this occasion and exclaimed triumphantly:

"At last France has got a Government!"

The Landeysen case, in a large degree, contributed to the Franco-Russian Alliance. I have official documents proving that fact.

Of course Ratchkovsky became *personâ grata* with the Russian Emperor and with the French Government. In Paris he wielded greater authority than the Russian Ambassador himself, and to this day in Delcassé's study there hangs a portrait of himself taken together with Ratchkovsky.

Many years later, however, Ratchkovsky came to grief. Plehve was then the omnipotent Dictator of Russia. He was for some reason displeased with Ratchkovsky and recalled him from his post abroad to Russia. Plehve distrusted both Ratchkovsky and Azeff and wished even totally to abolish the foreign service of the Russian police. But in this he was overruled by the Court. He then decided entirely to reorganise the *Okhranka* and the news of this decision filled the numerous agents of the *Okhranka* with dismay. In any case Plehve's plans were not

realised. On July 15, 1904, while Plehve was driving in his motor-car to report to the Tsar, two revolutionists, Sassonoff and Sikorsky, were stationed on the route with bombs. They waited for the signal which Azeff was to give. Everything was carefully calculated by Azeff himself. When Plehve's motor appeared, Azeff gave the signal, Sassonoff threw the bomb, and Plehve and his plans were scattered to the winds. But Azeff quietly went to the station and took train for Warsaw, where Ratchkovsky was waiting for him. They had an interview and both left for Vienna by different trains.

At the time of Witte's Premiership, when Durnovo was Minister of the Interior, Ratchkovsky was the Vice-Director of the Department of Police. In one of the rooms of the Department a secret printing-press was established and worked by the subordinates of Ratchkovsky. They printed proclamations inciting the people to organise *pogroms* for murdering the Jews. These proclamations were spread all over Russia by secret agents of the *Okhranka*. When Witte learnt this fact he was smitten with a nervous paroxysm. Ratchkovsky was immediately dismissed from his post and the printing-press disappeared. But the very next day after the dismissal, Ratchkovsky was comfortably sitting in his former office, at the same table and with the same authority. Only instead of Vice-Director of the Department of Police he was now called "Special Secretary of the Minister of the Interior." As a compensation for his change of title he received by order of the Tsar a cheque of 75,000 roubles. This new post in the old surroundings he preserves until to-day.

Names may change but the system remains, and the hopelessness of the situation is intensified by the fact that the Tsar himself is in sympathy with its methods.

On my table is now lying a unique document, a book of about sixteen inches in length, ten in breadth and four in thickness. It is the *Tsar's Gazette*, issued in one single copy for his personal use. Every few days the Minister of the Interior during his report to the Tsar hands over to his master a periodical account of revolutionary events. The Tsar reads the report immediately and marks it. Then it is sent back to the Department of Police, where it is kept in the greatest secrecy as a most precious relic because of the marks made by the Tsar upon it. At the end of every year all the numbers of the *Tsar's Gazette* are catalogued and magnificently bound. The number I speak of is for the year 1897. On the top of the first page of it is a broad blue pencil-line made by the Tsar himself, and close by this mark is written in the Minister's hand :

"His Majesty has deigned to examine this in Tsarkoe-Selo. (Signed) Minister of the Interior, Goremykin." Looking through this Gazette we find in it numerous articles with reports of "secret collaborators" *i.e.*, *agents provocateurs*, upon the doings of the revolutionary parties. We find there, also, letters stolen from Count Leo Tolstoy, Felix Volkhovsky, and others. We have therefore proofs that the Tsar knows of the existence of the *agents provocateurs ;* that not only does he approve of the methods of the *Okhranka* but is personally interested in their activity.

"Quos vult perdere Deus dementat prius !"

John and Edward Bumpus, Ltd.

350 OXFORD STREET, W.

Booksellers by Appointment to H.M. The King

Libraries arranged, checked and kept in order by competent assistants at moderate charges.

Bookbinding and the repairing of damaged volumes undertaken.

Estimates and designs can be submitted for special work requiring elaborate tooling.

Bookplates a Speciality.

Illuminated Addresses.

Second-hand Books and Rare Editions.

Catalogues on Application.

Price 2s. net.

A Greater God or None.

SERMONS BY HERBERT RIX, B.A.

Author of "Tent and Testament;" "A Dawning Faith;" Sermons and Addresses.

Some time Assistant-Secretary to the Royal Society.

Contents:

A Greater God or None. Limits—Their Use and Disappearance. Prayer. The Way of Perfection. Animal Suffering. The Guiding Hand.

Price 1s. net.

One with the Eternal.

By EDGAR DAPLYN.

Price 2s. net.

Arrows: Messages from Mystical Minds.

COMPILED BY MRS. BEATTY.

The aim of the compiler has been to produce something more generally useful than are the majority of Birthday Books; therefore, while a motto has been arranged for each day throughout the year, the usual dates have been omitted.

Price 2s. 6d. net.

The Pilgrim of the Infinite

By WILLIAM DAVIES.

(SECOND EDITION.)

THE PRIORY PRESS, 70 HIGH STREET, HAMPSTEAD, N.W.

THOMAS BAKER, Bookseller and Publisher,
72 NEWMAN STREET, LONDON, W.

ESTABLISHED 1849.

Speciality: Theology, Philosophy, History, Archæology, and Antiquities. Catalogues free on application. Export and Import.

BOOKS BOUGHT.

MR. BAKER will at all times be pleased to receive offers of scarce and valuable books either in single volumes or in larger quantities.

EXECUTORS AND SOLICITORS especially would do well to communicate with Mr. Baker regarding the sale of books.

AUTHORS AND OTHERS holding the stock of their Copyright books and wishing to sell the remainder should write to Mr. Baker.

REVIEWERS are solicited to submit lists of their surplus books.

ALL BONA-FIDE OFFERS WILL RECEIVE THE BEST CONSIDERATION AND IN EVERY CASE WILL BE ANSWERED.

Notable New Books.

THE HEART OF A GYPSY. By ROSAMOND NAPIER. 6s.

A Romantic Tale of Exmoor. Dedicated to all those to whom Sun, Wind, and Rain mean much.

THE SPY. By MAXIM GORKY. 6s.

A remarkable psychological study; presenting the revolution in the Russia of to-day, depicting the life of the men and women struggling for liberty. A startling exposure of the Department of Safety and the spy system. In the light of recent happenings, its publication is sensationally opportune.

London: DUCKWORTH & CO., 3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C.

To Students.
To All Book Lovers.
To all who would build up a Library.

The Times Book Club

will fill your library on terms arranged to suit your convenience.

You can obtain any books you wish to possess, and provided the amount of the purchase is not less than £5, you can pay for them by convenient monthly instalments.

We do not ask you to select the books from our catalogues or shelves; your range of choice is absolutely unrestricted. Moreover, if you wish to instal a library of books on any particular subject, we will, if you desire, draw you up a list of books which you should possess, and report the prices to you. Then, instead of buying them one at a time, as might be expedient, or even necessary, had you to pay cash for each as you bought it, all the books which you have chosen will be delivered to you at once, and become your own property. Payment will, however, be spread over a term of months, or years, so that an immediate and important addition to your library is possible, without the necessity of having to meet the whole expense at one time. Full particulars will be sent on application to

THE MANAGER,
The Times Book Club,
376-384 Oxford Street,
London, W.

THE ENGLISH REVIEW

A GLANCE at the names of the contributors to, and the subjects treated of in, the first volume, now complete, of "The English Review" should be sufficient to assure the reader that the projectors of the Review are succeeding in carrying out the aims with which they started. "The English Review" differs from all its contemporaries in the fact that it is mainly concerned with literature. It thus competes in no way with any review now existing; on the contrary, it supplements them all. For it is safe to say that no educated man seeing the list of contributors and the contents of the first volume can, if he wishes to be abreast with modern thought, afford to neglect "The English Review." Its contemporaries deal mostly with facts political and contemporary. "The English Review" deals almost entirely with thought which is neither of to-day alone nor solely of to-morrow. It has attempted to gather within its covers the most intimate writings of the best authors of to-day, both at Home and Abroad. It has attempted to put before the public the works of authors at present unknown, but of authors who in the view of its projectors may be expected to carry on the thought of to-morrow. That any very wide publicity in the present state of the country can be attained by such a venture is neither expected nor much hoped for by the projectors, but, seeing the standard to which "The English Review" has attained and the level at which it will continue to be conducted, the projectors of the Review have no hesitation in assuring the public that it is the duty of thinking men to give "The English Review" their support, not because they will be supporting a periodical—which is a matter only for its proprietors—but because they will be aiding in giving expression to much contemporary thought which would otherwise only with difficulty find a place for expression.

Contents of No. 1. December 1908

1.	THOMAS HARDY	A Sunday Morning Tragedy
2.	HENRY JAMES	The Jolly Corner
3.	JOSEPH CONRAD	Some Reminiscences
4.	JOHN GALSWORTHY	A Fisher of Men
5.	W. H. HUDSON	Stonehenge
6.	COUNT TOLSTOI	The Raid
7.	H. G. WELLS	Tono-Bungay
8.	THE MONTH: Editorial, Political and Diplomatic, Reviews	

Contents of No. 2. January 1909

1.	D. G. ROSSETTI	Jan Van Hunks
2.	ANATOLE FRANCE	Les Etrennes de Mlle. de Doucine
3.	R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM	Andorra
4.	VERNON LEE	The Virgin of the Seven Daggers
5.	JOSEPH CONRAD	Some Reminiscences
6.	COUNT TOLSTOI	The Raid
7.	H. G. WELLS	Tono-Bungay
8.	THE MONTH: Editorial, Rossettiana, Political and Diplomatic, Reviews, Communications, Supplements	

Contents of No. 3. February 1909

1.	MODERN POETRY	Gerhart Hauptmann, W. B. Yeats, Walter de la Mare, J. Marjoram, John Galsworthy
2.	NORMAN DOUGLAS	The Island of Typhoëus
3.	H. GRANVILLE BARKER	Georgiana
4.	JOSEPH CONRAD	Some Reminiscences
5.	J. SATURIN	Iván—"Isvoschick"
6.	VERNON LEE	The Virgin of the Seven Daggers
7.	H. G. WELLS	Tono-Bungay
8.	THE MONTH: Editorial, Political and Diplomatic, Review, Communications	

BOOKSELLERS **TRUSLOVE & HANSON, Ltd.** & STATIONERS

153 OXFORD STREET, LONDON, W.

All the best NEW and STANDARD WORKS kept in stock, and sent per return post.

CATALOGUES FREE.

HIGH-CLASS STATIONERY.

Relief Stamping and Illuminating Orders executed promptly. Samples sent free on application.

RUSSIAN LAW BUREAU

3 & 4 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, LONDON, W.C.

Telephone: 2074 Holborn. *Telegrams: "Ruslabu, London."*

A Russian Lawyer, member of the St. Petersburg Bar, in attendance daily between 11 A.M. and 5 P.M.

The Russia Law Bureau gives legal advice and assistance in all matters of Russian Law; it recovers debts contracted in Russia, claims inheritances left in Russia to British subjects, conducts every kind of civil litigation, criminal proceedings, watches the cases in their various stages in the Russian Law Courts, &c.

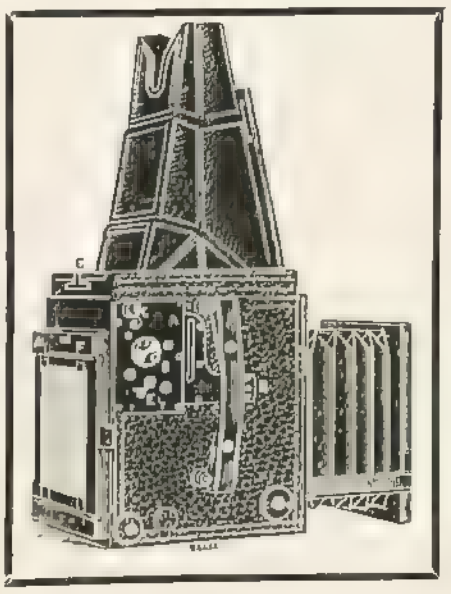
The Russian Law Bureau also makes legal translations from Russian and every other language into English and vice versa.

The SOHO-REFLEX CAMERA

ENGLISH MADE THROUGHOUT.

The Premier Reflex for QUALITY, PRECISION, DURABILITY, SIMPLICITY.

AN IDEAL HAND CAMERA
FOR ALL WORKERS,
THE SUPERIORITY OF THE
REFLEX TYPE OF CAMERA
BEING ADMITTED BY USERS,
EXPERTS, OR BEGINNERS.



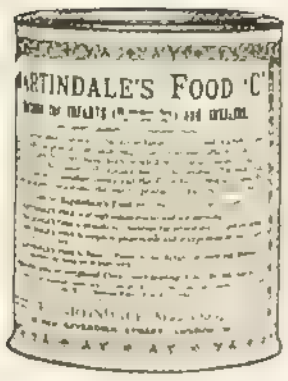
WE MAKE A SPECIALITY
OF REFLEX OUTFITS
FOR TRAVELLERS,
SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITIONS,
NATURALIST AND
TELEPHOTO WORK.

Write for full particulars of sizes and prices in the
26-page ILLUSTRATED BOOKLET OF THE SOHO-REFLEX,
post free.

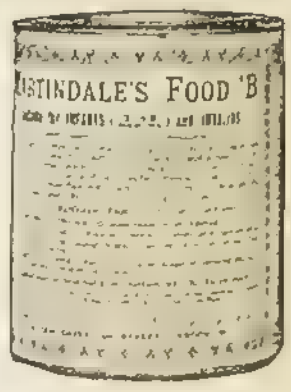
MARION & CO., Ltd., 22 & 23 Soho Square, London, W.

MARTINDALE'S

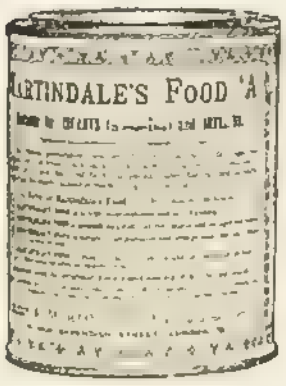
FOODS FOR INFANTS AND INVALIDS



"A," or First Food for Infants up to three months;
"B," or Second Food (three to six months); and
"C," Third Food (six months and upwards, and for Invalids).



In Martindale's Food the milk solids, which are in correct proportion to represent human milk, are in a condition of absolute purity, and the Food is of high concentration, self-digesting. It is prepared under the strictest antiseptic precautions.



Martindale's Food is simple in preparation and always ready for use. There is no milk to buy.

Martindale's Food is pure. There is no danger of conveying phthisis or diphtheria by using an impure milk.

Supplied only in 1 lb. tins.

Obtainable from any Chemist, or direct from

W. MARTINDALE, Manufacturing Chemists

10 NEW CAVENDISH ST., LONDON, W.

The New CADILLAC "THIRTY"

320 Guineas.

SOME PRESS OPINIONS.

"Morning Post," November 13th. "The Anglo-American Motor Car Co. have quite a remarkable exhibit in the introduction of a four-cylinder of 30 h.p., that is placed on the market complete at 320 guineas. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the manufacturers are perhaps more happily situated than any of their rivals in the matter of being able to produce a motor bearing their reputation for reliability of the power at the price."

"The Sketch," November 18th. "The Cadillac four-cylinder engine is an admirable piece of work. The surprise of the packet resides in the wonderful value offered in the 30 h.p., with smart five-seated body, for 320 guineas."

"Evening Standard," November 17th. "The new model is very attractive, as it embodies many new improvements and is powerful and well designed. The engine is particularly well balanced, and very flexible, while the new sliding gears are most efficient and silent."

"The Times," November 17th. "I examined the Cadillac in various forms, including a four-cylinder five-seated touring car at 320 guineas, which is certainly very cheap."

"Daily Telegraph," November 13th. "The new 30 h.p. has been designed on the lines of the popular four-cylinder 'four-inch' cars. As the Cadillac Company only make two sizes, the 10 h.p. single-cylinder, and the 30 h.p. four-cylinder, all their energies are put into the two models, and their low price is due to the large output of the American Works."

"The Car," November 18th. "The chef d'œuvre . . . is undoubtedly the four-cylinder shaft-driven 26–30 h.p. Cadillac, which is priced ready for the road at 320 guineas. There can be no question as to the excellent value that is given."

"Westminster Gazette," November 16th. "The chief novelty lies in the new 30 h.p., listed at the very low price of 320 guineas. The firm guarantee that its engine will give 30 h.p. at what is generally regarded as a phenomenally low running speed. . . . The 30 h.p. four-cylinder Cadillac at 320 guineas is one of the best examples in Olympia of how well and truly a car can be made at the price."

ANGLO-AMERICAN MOTOR CAR Co. Ltd., 19-21 Heddon St., Regent St., London, W.

Telegrams: "Angammotor, London." Telephone: 6383 Gerrard.

THE

MUSICUS PLAYER-PIANO

Price 42 guineas cash

Come and hear it played at

THE MUSICUS LIMITED,
8 NEWMAN STREET, LONDON, W.

AS SUPPLIED TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

WRIGHT'S PATENT

(No. 28,295)

A NOVELTY FOR BIRTHDAY AND WEDDING PRESENTS

The brown earthenware teapot is the recognised best tea-maker.

WRIGHT'S PATENT is a perforated Silver Casement beautifully designed, made in two parts, which fits the brown teapot and is fixed by four screws. It can thus be removed in case of breakage and placed on a new teapot.

Supplied by—

Messrs. " WRIGHT'S PATENT," Old Bond Street, W.

(Corner of Piccadilly, over Stewart's Tea Rooms)

Write for particulars.

TELEPHONE 3581 KENSINGTON.

MAISON D'UTILITÉ,

(WOMAN'S WORK UNION)

11 BEAUCHAMP PLACE,

BROMPTON ROAD, LONDON, S.W.

All kinds of Women's Work on Sale permanently. Hand-made English Laces in every variety. Laces cleaned and mended by an expert.

The co-operation of the public is hoped for.

S. TULLY,

Court Dressmaker, Costumier, and Milliner.

EXCLUSIVE FRENCH DESIGNS.

An Elegant **"Directoire" Evening Gown** in soft Satin, Chiffon Sleeves and Tucker, Latticed at side of Skirt with cord and tassels to match.

INCLUSIVE ESTIMATE,

4½ Gns.

Spécialité Fitting from Self-Measures and Pattern Bodice.

Smart Afternoon Gowns, from 5 Gns.

Smart Evening Gowns, from 4 Gns.

Tailor-made, from 2 Gns.

Ladies' Own Materials Made Up.

All orders must be accompanied by a remittance.

21 GREAT RUSSELL ST.,
Oxford St., London, W.C.

EGYPTIAN HOUSE,

170 PICCADILLY, W.

ZANNA,

CHAPEAU MODÈLES.

Fresh French Models Every Week.

The Latest Creations at Most Moderate Prices.

TELEPHONE 5042 GERRARD.

Jacqueline Ltd.

14 GRAFTON STREET

Beautiful Gowns at surprisingly Moderate Prices.

THE ENGLISH REVIEW

MARCH 1909

MODERN POETRY: THE BACK OF BEYOND: "THE VELVET GLOVE": SOME REMINISCENCES: THE COACH: FAMILY STORIES OF A PUBLIC SERVANT GEORGIANA: TONO-BUNGAY: THE MONTH EDITORIAL: POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC

LONDON: DUCKWORTH & CO.

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND CO. LIMITED, TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON
AND PUBLISHED BY DUCKWORTH AND CO., 3 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON
REGISTERED FOR CANADIAN POSTAGE